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THE

# WORKS

OF

# EZEKIEL HOPKINS, D.D.,

SUCCESSIVELY BISHOP OF RAPHOE AND DERRY.

Third American.

FROM PRATT'S LONDON EDITION.

EDITED BY REV. CHARLES W. QUICK.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

DISCOURSES CONCERNING SIN, THE TWO COVENANTS, THE TWO SACRAMENTS, AND PRACTICAL RELIGION.

GRACE BE WITH ALL THEM THAT LOVE OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST IN SINCERITY. — *Ephes.* vi. 24.

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Account of the present Edition.—Biographical Sketch of Bishop Hopkins.—The Vanity of the World.—A practical Exposition of the Lord's Prayer.—A Catechism on the Lord's Prayer.—A practical Exposition of the Ten Commandments.—Discourses on the Law.—Discourses concerning Sin.

### VOLUME II.

Discourses concerning Sin, continued.—The Doctrine of the Two Covenants.—A Treatise on Regeneration, or the New Birth.—The Doctrine of the Two Sacraments.—The All-sufficiency of Christ to save and intercede for Sinners.—The Excellence of Heavenly Treasures.—Practical Christianity in working out our own Salvation.—The Assurance of Salvation a strong motive to serve God.—On Glorifying God in his Attributes.

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PRINCETON
THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY

# ACCOUNT OF THE PRESENT EDITION.

THIS first American edition of Bishop Ezekiel Hopkins' Works is a reprint of Pratt's London edition of 1809. The only abridgment is the omission of two discourses, found among the "Miscellaneous Sermons" in the fourth volume. They are entitled "On Submission to Rulers," and "Against Rebellion." They contain references to the constitution and laws of England, and maintain political views considered inapplicable to the circumstances of this country. Entire omission was judged preferable to the publication of them expurgated of local references, particularly, because said local and historical references far exceed the matter which would interest the general reader.

Dedicatory Epistles, Introductions, Prefatory matter relating to the descendants of Bishop Hopkins, and Editorial notices addressed to the critical and inquisitive reader, have been omitted also.

The Editor has embraced the opportunity furnished by a republication of the best edition of the Author's works, to make some amendments and improvements in a direction pointed out by Mr. Pratt, and in which he proceeded to some extent. The work had reached the middle of the second volume before it came into our hands. Hence, all the changes adopted could not be made in that part of the publication.

The typography has been changed, and the page made more pleasing by the curtailment of the use of Italics.

Scripture quotations have been restored to exact agreement with the standard text, and their quotation indicated in the usual way.

The orthography of some words has been made to conform to the changes which have taken place in modern times, and the

great American lexicographer has been taken as the standard authority.

Many obsolete words have been removed, and modern words and expressions have been substituted.

Many grammatical defects, with which old English abounds, have been remedied, and repetitions in the statements of subjects discussed have been avoided.

By these changes, neither affecting the substance of doctrine, nor the integrity of the Author's works, it is hoped that an addition has been made to the theological literature of the times, more pleasing and useful than an exact reprint could have afforded.

The Index of Texts has been revised and enlarged so as to contain all the passages quoted or referred to in any way by the Author. The Index of Subjects has been freed from redundant matter, and is more convenient than any other published in former editions.

The following notation of Mr. Pratt will be useful to the reader in obtaining a perfect comprehension of the author's plan, and will assist the memory.

"The principal divisions are printed in full capitals, and are marked with the full Roman numerals: thus I., II., &c.

"The secondary heads are printed in small Roman capitals, with small Roman numerals: thus i., ii., &c.

"The third subdivisions are printed in Italics, with the common Arabic numerals: thus 1, 2, &c.

"The remainder have no distinction in the type, except occasionally that the chief words begin with a capital letter: but the notation is as follows:

"Subdivisions of the Fourth Order thus: (1), (2), &c. Fifth, [1], [2], &c. Sixth, 1st., 2dly, &c. Seventh, (1st.), (2dly), &c. Eighth, [1st.], [2dly], &c. Ninth, (a), (b), &c. Such divisions as could not be brought under any regular head are printed thus: FIRST, &c., or First, &c., or *First*, &c."

C. W. Q.

# DISCOURSES CONCERNING SIN.

## VI.

### THE NATURE, DANGER, AGGRAVATIONS, AND CURE OF PRESUMPTUOUS SINNING, WITH THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RESTRAINING AND SANCTIFYING GRACE IN EFFECTING THEREOF.

*Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins: let them not have dominion over me.* PSAL. xix. 13.

HAVING, in my former subject, treated of abstinence from those things that have in them the *appearance of evil*, I shall now, from the words read to you, speak something also of those things that are apparently evil: that, as you have already, in part, seen what Christian prudence and circumspection is required, that your conversations be not offensive; so, here, you may also see what fervency of prayer, what measure of grace is requisite, that they be not grossly wicked.

In the verse immediately before the Text, the Psalmist prays, that God would *cleanse* him from his *secret faults;* that is, from sins of ignorance, whereof he knew himself to be guilty in the general, though in particular he knew not what they were. In this verse, he prays, that God would keep him from Sins of Presumption. The connection of these two requests is somewhat remarkable, and may afford us this pertinent and profitable Observation.

That SIN IS OF A GROWING AND ADVANCING NATURE.

From weakness to wilfulness, from ignorance to presumption, is its ordinary course and progress. The cloud, that Elijah's man saw, was at first no bigger than a hand's breadth; and it threatened no such thing as a general tempest: but yet, at last, it overspread the face of the whole heavens: so, truly, a sin, that, at first, ariseth in the soul but as a small mist, and is scarce discernible; yet, if it be not scattered by the breath of prayer, it will at length overspread the whole life, and become most tempestuous and raging. And therefore David, as one experienced in the deceitfulness of sin, doth thus digest and methodize his prayer: first, against secret and lesser sins; and, then, against the more gross and notorious; as knowing the one proceeds and issues from the other; Lord, *cleanse me from* my *secret faults;* and this will be a most effectual means, to preserve and keep thy servant from Presumptuous Sins.

And this Observation may be gathered from the connection of the two requests. But I shall not insist on that.

The words are a most sincere and affectionate prayer: and, in them, are observable,

First. The Person, that makes it. And that is not a vile notorious sinner; one, that used to be overcome by presumptuous sins: but David, a man after God's own heart, eminent for holiness and piety: *Keep back thy servant* says he, *from Presumptuous Sins.*

Secondly. The Request and Petition itself. And that is, that God would keep him, not from sins of common frailty and daily infirmity, such as no man's holiness can exempt him from: but from sins of presumption; from daring and ranting sins, such as one would think, that no man, that hath the least holiness in him, could ever commit: *Keep back thy servant from Presumptuous Sins.*

In this Petition Two things are evidently implied.

*First.* That strong propension, that there is in the best, to the worst sins.

Were it not so, what need David pray for restraining grace? *Keep back thy servant.* Lord, my corruptions hurry me with all violence into the greatest sins: they persuade, they force, they drag, they draw, they thrust forward; and now, now I am going and yielding; but, Lord withold me: put a curb and check upon these violent and headstrong corruptions of mine: keep back, keep me back from Presumptuous Sins.

*Secondly.* It implies that utter impotency, that the best lie under, to preserve themselves from the foulest sins, without the special aid and assistance of divine grace.

My heart is not in my own hands: my ways are not at my own disposal: I cannot stand longer than thou upholdest me: I cannot walk longer than thou leadest me: if thou withdrawest thine everlasting arms from under me, I shall stumble, and fall, and tumble headlong into fearful precipices, into vile impieties, into hell and perdition itself; and, therefore, Lord, do thou keep me: do thou by thy omnipotency, supply my impotency: by thy power keep me from what mine own weakness will certainly betray me unto; *Keep back thy servant from Presumptuous Sins.*

These two things are implied and couched in the petition itself.

Thirdly. In the Text we have the Reason also why David prays so earnestly against presumptuous sins. Which reason carries in it the form of a distinct petition by itself. *Keep back thy servant from Presumptuous Sins: let them not have dominion over me.* But yet it may be well understood as a reason of the foregoing request: Therefore, Lord, *keep* me *from Presumptuous Sins:* lest by falling into the commission of them, I fall also under the power of them;

lest, by prevailing upon me, they get dominion and sovereignty over me. And, in this reason also, we have a hint of the still encroaching nature of sin: from the allowance of little and secret sins, it proceeds to the commission of gross and presumptuous sins; and, from the commission of these, it proceeds to dominion over him: and, therefore, if we would not be slaves to our lusts and vassals to the Devil, we had need all of us, to pray with David, Lord, keep us from secret sins, lest they break out into open and presumptuous sins; and, Lord, *keep* us *from Presumptuous sins;* lest they get dominion over us.

From the words thus divided and opened, several useful Observations may be raised.

As, first, from the Petition itself, we may observe these Two doctrinal points.

First. That, *in the very best Christians, there is great proneness and inclination to the very worst sins.* David himself prays for restraining grace, to keep him from presumptuous sins.

Secondly. Observe, *It is not our own power, but only divine grace, that can preserve us from the most horrid and vile sins.* Those sins, that we now abhor the very thoughts of; yet, were we but left to ourselves, and were but divine grace abstracted from us, even those sins we should commit with all greediness.

And, then, from the Person who makes this prayer and request unto God, observe,

Thirdly. That, *Because the strongest Christians are too weak of themselves to resist the greatest sins, therefore they ought continually to implore the aid and assistance of divine grace.* David, though a strong and mighty saint, yet durst not trust himself alone to grapple with a corruption or a temptation; and, therefore, in the sense of his own weakness, he prays the Lord to keep him: Keep thou thy servant.

And, then, from the reason, *Keep* me *from Presumptuous sins,* lest they get *dominion over me;* or, *let them not* get *dominion over me:* observe,

Fourthly. That, *the frequent commission of presumptuous and daring sins, will subject the soul to the reigning power and dominion of sin.*

But I shall not handle each of these by themselves; but give you the sum and substance of them all in one, and so prosecute that. Which is this:

That THE BEST SECURITY, WHICH THE BEST OF GOD'S CHILDREN HAVE FROM THE COMMISSION AND FROM THE DOMINION OF PRESUMPTUOUS SINS, IS ONLY THEIR OWN FERVENT PRAYERS AND GOD'S ALMIGHTY GRACE.

In the Prosecution of this doctrine, I shall endeavour to show you, When it is that a man is guilty of Presumptuous Sins, and wherein the Nature of such sins consists.

I. WHEN A MAN IS GUILTY OF PRESUMPTUOUS SINS.

1. Then a Sin is Presumptuous, WHEN IT IS COMMITTED AGAINST THE POWERFUL DICTATES OF A MAN'S OWN CONSCIENCE AND AGAINST THE CLEAR CONVICTION OF THE HOLY GHOST.

When conscience is awakened in conviction, and rings aloud in men's ears, "The ways thou livest in are grossly sinful, the end of them is hell and death: thou wadest through the dearest blood of thine own soul, if thou goest on. Seest thou not how guilt dismally stares thee in the face? Seest thou not how the mouth of hell belches out fire, and flames, and brimstone against thee? Stop, therefore: I here, as God's officer, arrest thee:" If now, when conscience thus calls, and cries, and threatens, men will yet venture on, this is most bold and daring presumption. To disobey the arrest, but of the king's officer, is a most presumptuous crime: how much more, therefore, to disobey the arrest of conscience; which is the chief and supreme officer of God, and who commands in the name, yea, in the stead of God, as it were, in the soul!

And yet, truly, who among us is not, in some kind or other guilty of this presumption? Sirs, if God should now come down in terrible majesty in the midst of us, and if he should ask every man's conscience here, one by one, "Conscience, wert thou ever resisted? wert thou ever opposed in executing thine office, to this and to that soul?" where sits the person, whose conscience must not answer, "Yes, Lord, I accuse him: I testify to his very face, I have often warned and admonished him, 'Oh, do not venture upon this or that action: there is sin, there is guilt lies under it: there is wrath and vengeance, that will follow it: oh pity, oh spare thine own soul: this sin will everlastingly ruin thee if thou committest it?" "And, what! didst thou commit it notwithstanding all this?" "Yes, Lord: while I was laying before him all the arguments, that the thoughts of heaven and hell, of thy glory and his own happiness, could administer; yet, so presumptuous was he, as to fall upon me thine officer; and these stabs, these gashes and wounds I received, while I was admonishing him, and warning him in thy name."

O Sirs, a thousand times better were it for us, that we never had consciences; better, that our consciences were utterly scattered and become insensible; better, that they were struck for ever dumb, and should never open their mouths more to reprove or to rebuke us; better, that we never had had the least glimmering of light to

distinguish betwixt our duty and what is sin; than thus desperately to outface and stifle our convictions, and to offer violence to our consciences, and presumptuously to rush into the commission of sin in despite of all these: better, men had no consciences at all, or that they were given up to a seared and reprobate sense; than to sin thus in despite of their consciences. What says our Saviour, Luke xii. 47? *That servant which knew his Lord's will,* and did it not, *shall be beaten with many stripes.*

There are Two things, wherein it appears that all sins against conscience and against convictions are Presumptuous Sins.

1. *Because, in all such sins, there is a most horrid contempt of the authority and sovereignty of the Great God.*

And what higher presumption can there be, than for vile worms to set at nought the authority of that God, at whose frown heaven, and hell, and earth tremble? The voice of conscience, rightly informed by the Scripture, is the voice of God himself: it is God speaking in a man, and whispering to a man's very heart. As Moses was the interpreter betwixt God and the Israelites, so conscience is the interpreter betwixt God and us. Would it not have been, think you, a most desperate presumption, and a most daring affront against the majesty and sovereignty of God, while he was with his own voice pronouncing the Ten Commandments, with thundering and lightning and earthquake, from Mount Sinai, for the Israelites to have been notoriously breaking and sinning against every one of those Commandments, as he spake them? Truly, though now God delivers his will and commands to us, not immediately by his own mouth, as then he did, but by conscience his interpreter; yet, while we know that conscience speaks to us in the name of God, it is as much fearful presumption for us to slight the voice of conscience, as if we should slight the voice of God himself speaking from heaven immediately to us.

And that is the first thing.

2. By sinning against our consciences and against our convictions, *we make it very evident, that we stand in no awe nor dread of any such thing as hell and eternal damnation.*

And is not that boldness? Is not that presumption? You scorn, possibly, to be such puling, whimpering sinners, as to be affrighted with such bugbears as everlasting torments, and everlasting wrath and vengeance. You know the wages of sin is death; and that the ways you take lead down to the chambers of destruction: and, yet, though God and the Devil stand in the way, you will through. Are not these, think you, bold and presumptuous sinners, that will

go on in sin, though hell-fire flashes in their faces? Though God should cleave the ground upon which they walk, and through that chink should give them a view of hell; though they should see the damned tumbling up and down in those torments, and hear their yellings, and shriekings, and roarings; yea, though God should point them out a place in hell, and tell them, "Look, Sinner, yonder is a place kept void, and heated from the beginning of the world for thee:" yet are there some such bold and daring wretches, that they would outbrave all this, and would sin in despite either of heaven or hell. Yea, and which is a most sad and dreadful consideration, some there are, whose consciences are already brimfull of extreme horror and anguish; and yet they will venture upon those sins, that have caused that horror. And are not such, presumptuous sinners? They give their consciences wound upon wound; and, though sometimes they roar bitterly, yet they will sin outrageously, even then when they roar and smart for sin. So that it is a clear evidence of a Presumptuous Sin, when a sin is committed against a man's own conscience, against knowledge, and against conviction. This makes a sin to be a presumptuous sin, when conscience cries out murder, murder, soul-murder; when it beseeches, with tears of blood that they draw from it, to desist from their sins, and yet is not heard nor regarded. This is presumptuous sinning; sinning, with a high hand, and with a brazen forehead.

ii. Then a man sins presumptuously, WHEN HE SINS UPON LONG DELIBERATION AND FORECAST; PLOTTING AND CONTRIVING WITH HIMSELF, HOW HE MAY ACCOMPLISH HIS SIN.

Some sins are committed merely through a sudden surprise: a temptation comes upon the soul unawares, and finds it unprovided to make any resistance: and so it prevails.

So it was with the Apostle Peter. His apostasy and perjury were indeed very dreadful: yet he was overcome by a sudden surprise. He had no foregoing thoughts and purposes to deny his Master: yea, his resolution was, to own and confess him to the very death: and, therefore, though his sins were foul sins, yet they cannot be called Presumptuous Sins; but rather sins of weakness and infirmity.

And so there are divers Christians, that are overtaken with faults against their resolutions and prayers; yea, and contrary to their own expectations. Now the sins of such persons are not Presumptuous Sins: but then a sin becomes presumptuous, when it is committed after long deliberation, premeditation, and forecast.

There is a twofold deliberation, that makes a sin presumptuous.

1. *When a man sins, after he hath deliberated with himself, whether he shall sin or not:* when, upon debating the case at length, after much pondering and consideration, he consents to sin.

And thus, though St. Peter denied his Master upon a surprisal, yet Judas betrayed him upon deliberation. Now this is desperate presumption, to sin, when a man ponders and considers with himself, and weighs the reasons on both sides, whether he shall sin or not. And yet, truly, of such Presumptuous Sins as these are, we may all of us be found guilty. Ask but yourselves: did you never commit a sin, after you had weighed in your deliberate thoughts all circumstances: putting in the beneficial consequences, the pleasure, profit and credit of sin, in the one balance; and the dangerous and destructive consequences, that wrath and hell that are due to sin, in the other balance? Who of us all can acquit himself, from being guilty of sinning, after such comparisons as these have been made; after the due weighing both of sin and our duty? and, yet, have we not chosen the sin before our duty? Truly, to sin after such deliberate comparisons as these are, is a provoking and a Presumptuous Sin.

2. *When men do deliberate and contrive, how they may sin to the greatest advantage, how they may make the most of their iniquities: when they plot and contrive with themselves, how they may squeeze and draw out the very utmost of all that pleasure and sweet that they imagine sin carries with it: this makes that sin a Presumptuous Sin.*

Thus, those drunkards contrived to prolong their sin: Isaiah lvi. 12. *Come ye, say they,* we *will fetch wine, and.....fill ourselves with strong drink; and to-morrow shall be as* this *day, and much more abundant.* Here they forecasted to make as great advantage as they could of their drunkenness, and to get as much pleasure out of it as they could. This is most presumptuous sinning. Thus, the prophet Jeremiah also speaks of those, that were *wise to do evil:* Jer. iv. 22; that could improve sin to the very utmost; and could get more out of a sin by their husbanding of it, than another could that had not that skill and mystery; these are *wise to do evil.* And such are Presumptuous Sins: when men stretch and strain their wits brimfull of sinful devices, either so as they may reap most from them, or so as they may keep their wickedness secret from the observation and notice of men, then they sin presumptuously. Do not, therefore, flatter yourselves, that, though indeed you are sinners, as who indeed is not? yet, you sin only through weakness and infirmity. Ask your own consciences: did you never sin: or do you not use to sin, upon premeditation and forecast? When

you have conceived sin in your own hearts, do you not nurse it and nourish it there, till you find some fit opportunity to commit it; plotting to lay hold on some fit occasion to act some wicked imagination that you have hatched in your own heart? If so, this is clear, your sinning is not out of weakness, but from stubbornness and wilfulness.

iii. THE MORE QUIET AND CALM YOUR AFFECTIONS ARE WHEN YOU SIN, THE MORE FREE YOU ARE FROM THE HURRYINGS AND PERTURBATIONS OF PASSIONS WHEN YOU SIN, THE MORE PRESUMPTUOUS ARE YOUR SINS.

Indeed, it is no sufficient excuse, that you sin in a passion; no more than it is for a murderer to say he was drunk when he did it: but, yet, this takes off something from the presumption in sinning. Then a man is a bold and arrogant sinner, when he can sin calmly; and bid defiance to God and heaven, in cold blood.

Now St. Peter's denial of Christ, was from the excessive passion of fear, that then surprised him, and scattered his graces; but, when that passion was over, he recruited again: but Judas had no passion; but the wickedness of his own heart wrought quietly and calmly in him, to the betraying of his Master.

When the winds rage violently, no wonder if sometimes the tallest cedars are overthrown by them; but those trees, that fall of their own accord, when the air is still and calm, it is a certain sign they were rotten. So it is in this case: when the tempest of passion rageth, be it fear or any other passion and perturbation of the mind, no wonder if sometimes the tallest and the strongest Christians fall, are cast down, and overwhelmed by it; but, if men fall into sin when their intellectuals are clear, and when their reason is calm and undisturbed, truly this is a certain sign these men are rotten, and these presumptuous sins have gotten dominion over them, for they fall like rotten trees of their own accord, without any tempest of passion to stir them.

iv. WHEN AT ANY TIME YOU COMMIT A SIN, CONSIDER WHAT THE TEMPTATIONS ARE THAT ASSAULT YOU, AND HOW YOU BEHAVE YOURSELVES UNDER THOSE TEMPTATIONS; FOR, FROM THENCE, YOU MAY CONJECTURE, WHETHER YOUR SINS BE PRESUMPTUOUS OR NOT.

Temptations, as they are strong inducements unto sin, so sometimes they are great mitigations of sin. The more violently the soul is baited and wearied with temptations, the less presumption is it guilty of if at length it yields. This, God doth judge to be weakness, not wilfulness. He knows our frame; that we are but dust and ashes; and that we are no match for principalities and

powers: and those mighty enemies, that we are to combat with, we can no more stand before than so much loose dust before a fierce and rapid whirlwind.

Yea, were there no Devil to tempt, yet the corruptions of our own hearts are much too hard for us: but, when both our own lusts and the Devil shall conspire together, the one to betray us with all its deceitfulness and the other to force us with all its power, who then can stand? If God, at such a time as this is, withdraw his grace and Spirit, as sometimes he doth from the best of his servants, where is the Christian that ever coped with these temptations, and was not vanquished and captivated by them?

It is true, when God assists him, the weakest Christian proves victorious over the strongest temptations. A dwarf may beat a giant, when he is manacled that he cannot stir nor resist. God sees that Satan is an over-match for us; and, therefore, he ties his hands, before he sets us out to the conflict; and what wonder is it, if we then conquer? When God hath trodden Satan under us, no wonder, if, as weak as we are, we can then trample upon him too.

But, that all our success may appear to be, not from our own strength, but from God's might, he leaves us sometimes to Satan, and lets loose Satan upon us in all his rage. He leads us into temptation, and he leaves us under temptation; and, when we are buffeted, we then yield and fall, and the Devil shamefully triumphs over us.

In this case, which is one of the saddest that a Christian can be in, though the sin be very foul and heinous; yet the same power of temptation, that makes us sin heinously, keeps us from sinning presumptuously. Presumptuous Sins are not to be measured by the bulk and ugliness of the action, but by the forward and headlong consent of the will unto it; and, therefore, a gross sin may sometimes be but a sin of infirmity, when yet a sin of a less nature is desperately daring and presumptuous. In the Law, if a person that was ravished struggled and cried out aloud for help, the crime was not imputed to her: so, if the soul be forcibly ravished by temptations, though it struggle and strive against them, though it call upon its God, crying aloud, "Help, Lord," though it call up its graces, "Arise, help;" this sin shall not be imputed to it as a presumptuous sin.

How then shall we judge by our temptations, whether the sins which we commit are presumptuous or not?

I answer: you may judge of it, by these following particulars.

1. *If we commit sin, when we are not besieged and disturbed by violent*

*and invincible temptations, this is too certain a sign, that then we sin presumptuously.*

This plainly shows a will strongly fixed and resolved to sin. When men will surrender and yield up their souls to the Devil, even before he summons them; and when they will consent to sin upon every small and trivial temptation, as soon as they have but a hint and glimpse of some sinful object passing before them, though it offer them no violence, though it present nothing to them of so much pleasure and profit and credit in it, but that a generous Christian might easily disdain, if yet they run out after it, and will sin merely because they will; these are most desperate sinners, that are impatient to wait the leisure of a lingering and lazy temptation. They know the Devil hath much work to do in the world; many thousands to tempt, deceive, and draw to perdition: and, therefore, they will not trouble him; and, for his ease, they will sin without a temptation, and ruin their own souls without any help of any other devil than what their own hearts prove to them. As those are the best and most stayed Christians, that are constant in the performance of holy duties, even then when they have no strong impulses and motions from the Holy Ghost unto duty: so, truly, those are the worst and most stubborn sinners, that even then commit sin with greediness, when they have no violent impulses and temptations from the Devil to hurry them into sin.

Now there are Two things, whereby it plainly appears, that then a Sin is Presumptuous, when it is committed without strong and violent temptations to it.

(1) Hereby we do evidently declare a fearful contempt of the great God.

We never more vilify and disparage God, than when we do that for nothing, which we know his soul hates. Should the Devil, when he tempts you, take you, as he took Christ, and show you the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them all, and promise to bestow all these upon you: yet, when God shows you the infinite glory of the kingdoms of another world, you can plead no natural reason why you should consent to sin; God infinitely outbidding the Devil, even then when the Devil bids highest. But, when you will prefer a sin that bids nothing, a barren, fruitless, and unprofitable lust, before the holy will of the great God and the sure promises of eternal glory, what reason or pretence can you show why you should sin, unless it be, because you are resolved rather to despite and affront God, than to advantage your own souls? And this was the great aggravation of Judas's Sin, and that which made it so ex-

ceeding Presumptuous: what a poor temptation were thirty pieces of silver, to induce him to the vilest wickedness that ever was committed since the world stood! It was no more than the ordinary value and rate of a slave: as you may see in Exod. xxi. 32; amounting much to about thirty seven shillings and sixpence: and, yet, so far did he undervalue Christ, as that, for this small price, he sold the Lord of Life and Glory: and this, God himself takes notice of, as a great indignity done unto him; Zech. xi. 13; *A goodly price*, says God by the Prophet there, *was I prized at of them!* I know that, at the very hearing of this, your hearts rise up in detestation of the cursed covetousness of Judas, that ever he should suffer himself to be tempted by so base a reward as a few shillings were, to betray Him to death, who was infinitely more worth than heaven and earth. Why, the case is yours: nay, wonder not at it: he betrayed him for thirty pieces of silver, and you daily crucify him and put him to open shame: you wound and pierce him to the very heart. for much less than that is: look back upon your past life, can you not recal to mind, that you have been prevailed upon to commit many a sin by such poor and inconsiderable things as scarce bear the show, or face, or appearance of a temptation? have you not dealt very injuriously with God and Christ, and set them at nought for a little gain, for some vanishing delight, for compliance sake, for the fickle favour of men? yea, very feathers and empty nothings have weighed down the scales with you against God! The Devil's first and greatest sin was pride, and contempt of God: and how much is he pleased and humoured, to see the same contempt of God rivetted in the hearts of men; and to see him so much slighted in the world, that he can scarce bid low enough when he tempts, but whatever he offers is greedily snatched at, and preferred before God and heaven, though it be but a very toy and trifle! This, certainly, must needs be a very heinous contempt of the Great Majesty of Heaven, and must needs argue most desperate boldness and presumptuous sinning.

(2) When men sin upon small or no temptations, they declare plainly a wretched neglect of their precious souls; and, therefore, they sin presumptuously.

I have read of a soldier, who, being with two others for some crime condemned, drew lots for his life; and, having drawn one lot that saved and pardoned him, seeing one of his companions come shivering and quaking to draw, told him, that, for two shillings, or thereabouts, he would take his lot, whatever it was: he drew again, and again it proved successful to him: however, it was a most dar-

ing presumption, that after so narrow an escape, he should again hazard his life, and set it to sale for so small a price as that was. Truly, the like presumption we ourselves are guilty of: we purchase toys and trifles, with the dreadful hazards of our souls; those souls, that are infinitely more worth than ten thousand worlds: we make common barter and exchange for every base lust; and, as prodigals pay very dear for very toys only to satisfy their fancies, so do we lay down our precious souls at stake for those lusts that usually have nothing in them besides the satisfaction of the humours and fancies of our own wills in sin. Would you not censure that man to be most desperately fool-hardy, that should venture to dive into the bottom of the sea, only to take up pebbles and gravel? How great deal of folly and presumption then are they guilty of, who dive even to the bottom of hell, only to get straws and feathers, and such impertinent vanities and inconsiderable nothings, that certainly men would never hazard their immortal souls for, unless they thought they did themselves a courtesy to be damned! How many are there, that would not suffer, no not so much as a hair of their head to be twitched off, to gain that, for which they will not stick to lie and swear; sins that murder their souls! They are so foolish, that the Lord complains in Isa. lii. 3, they sell themselves *for nought:* either they stay not till the Devil comes to cheapen them, but sin beforehand; or, else, they readily take any price, that he offers for them: any vile trifle is looked upon as a great purchase, if they can procure it at so low a price as hell and damnation is. What is it, that makes the swearer open his throat as wide as hell against heaven and God himself: but only, that he fancies that a big, full-mouthed oath makes his speech more graceful and stately? And what is it, that makes the company-keeper run into all excess with riot, and drown himself in all sensuality; but only, that he may comply with his debauched companions, and not disgust them by any singularity and reservedness?

And can these things be called Temptations? Are these things matters of such weight, as deserve to be put in the balance against the soul's eternal happiness and glory? Is it possible, that men, that have noble and immortal souls in them, should ever so far debase them, as to bring them into competition with, nay to make them to be the price of, such vile nothings as these are? And, yet, tell these men, that they hereby rouse up God's wrath against them, that burns to the lowest hell; tell them, that they destroy their precious souls; tell them, that they get nothing by such sins as these are, unless they reckon damnation for gain: yet, let God

frown and hell triumph, and their souls perish, they will on; and will not raise the rate of sinning, nor put the Devil to more charges; and so they are damned for nothing. Is not this most desperate boldness and presumption? and, therefore, do not lay the blame of your sins upon the violence of temptation, or upon the restless importunities of the Devil. When God shall, at the Last Day, call, "Sinner, stand forth: what is the reason you committed such and such sins, that had nothing in them to commend them, that left nothing after them but shame without and terrors within?" will you then plead as now usually you do, that Temptations were too hard for you, and the Devil too strong for you to resist? No, no: it will then be made apparent, that the Devil was falsely charged with multitudes of sins, that he never knew of till they were committed. And, therefore, when men sin upon slight Temptations, it is not from the power of Temptations, it is not from the importunity of the Devil, that they sin; but, only, from a presumptuous resolution, that they will sin whatever it cost them.

And that is the First Trial.

2. *When a man wilfully and knowingly runs himself into temptations and upon occasions of sin, if he be overcome by these temptations, he sins presumptuously notwithstanding.*

In this case, though the temptation be violent and irresistible; yea, though, when we are entangled by it, we strive and struggle to our very utmost: yet this doth not mitigate, but rather aggravate our sin; because it was merely through our own presumption, that we brought ourselves under the power of such a prevalent temptation, from which Christian fear and caution might easily have preserved us. If a man, that is wholly ignorant of the art of swimming, shall plunge himself into a deep river, though he struggle hard for life afterwards; yet, if he sinks and is drowned, he perishes only through his own presumption. That man deserves to be blown up, that will make gunpowder in a smith's shop, when the sparks fly thick about him: truly, occasions of sinning are the Devil's forge, where he is continually heating and hammering out his fiery darts: now, for you, that know yourselves to be as catching as powder or tinder, wilfully to run yourselves into this forge, where his fiery darts glow, and sparkle, and fly about you; what is this, but most desperate boldness and presumption? What says the Wise Man, Prov. vi. 27? *Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burnt?* Can a man run himself upon such occasions of sin, and not run also into the commission of sin? As the motion of a stone, when it falls downward, is still the swifter the

nearer it comes to its centre; so, when you are running yourselves into the occasions of sin, the more willingly you go to sin, the nearer you come to it, there is no stop nor stay: when you put yourselves upon these occasions and temptations, you put yourselves out of the protection of God's grace, and you stand wholly at the Devil's courtesy; and, if you are overcome, blame nothing but your own venturousness and presumption. Consider this, therefore: hast thou not had frequent experience of many sad foils, that the Devil hath given thee, by thy rash venturing upon occasions and temptations to sin? Hast thou not found such and such company, such and such employments, and other like circumstances, always prove snares to thee? Never plead these temptations were too strong for thee to resist: what! canst thou not resist them? And, believe it: if the experience of thine own weakness doth not make thee careful for the future to shun such snares and intanglements as these are, thy sins will be judged by God, at the Last Day, to be wilful and presumptuous sins: for they are so, if not in themselves considered, yet at least in their cause; for you presumptuously run into those occasions and temptations, whereby, in all likelihood, you will be overcome: and this is to sin presumptuously.

3. Suppose that we are strongly tempted, without the betraying of ourselves to the temptation: then consider, *If you commit the sin to which you are tempted, without vigorous and resolute resistance; this is a certain sign that you sin presumptuously.* Let the temptation be never so strong and irresistible; yet, if you yield to it without opposition or resistance made against it to your utmost, you then sin presumptuously.

A child of God, when he acts like himself, falls fighting. The Devil gets not a foot of ground upon him, but by main force and strength. Though *principalities* and *powers*, though *the rulers of the darkness of this world*, and *spiritual wickednesses in high places*, set themselves all in array against him; yet he encounters them all, and wrestles with them all: and though, sometimes, through weakness, he is overcome; yet he never basely yields: he fights standing, and he fights falling, and he fights rising; and, therefore, when he sins, it is through weakness, and not through presumption. But others, though they are very bold and presumptuous against God; yet they are very cowards against their lusts, and against the temptations of the Devil: when a temptation assaults them, they dare not presume to oppose that; but they dare presume to offend and provoke God himself: that, they dare do. Believe it, Sirs: you

must be bold and resolute, either against the Devil, or against the Great God: one of these you must grapple with: choose which you think you may best oppose, and soonest conquer. The Devil stands before you, armed with his *fiery darts:* God follows you, armed with everlasting vengeance. If you will not engage against Satan, and resolutely oppose him and all his force; what do you else, but turn upon God, and challenge him to the combat, and make him your enemy, that is *able to destroy both body and soul in* hell-fire for ever? What a most daring presumption is this, that ever we should basely surrender up ourselves to the Devil, without striking one stroke in our own defence; and yet, at the same time, we should dare to provoke that God, that can, with one look and frown, sink us into the lowest hell!

And, thus, in these Three particulars, we see when a sin is presumptuous, in respect of temptations: when it is committed, without temptations; when we run into temptations and occasions of sin; and when we make no vigorous opposition against them.

4. Another trial is this: *When men will dare to sin, under eminent and remarkable judgments and afflictions, that God brings upon them, then they sin presumptuously.*

What is this else, but, when God stands visibly in your way, yet you will desperately run upon the *thick bosses of his buckler? He hedgeth up* your *way with thorns,* and yet you will break through, though it be to the tearing of your flesh. He strikes at you by his judgments: and, oh the madness and presumption of vile dust and ashes, that they dare to strike at God again by their sins! What is this else, but even to dare God to do his worst? When God treads upon us, should such vile worms as we are, turn the tail, and threaten to take revenge upon the Almighty? This is presumption and boldness, that God takes special notice of, in 2 Chron. xxviii. 22, Ahaz was brought very low, says the text: and, yet, *in the time of his distress, he* trespassed *yet more against the Lord: This is that king Ahaz:* God sets a mark and brand upon him, that he may be known to all posterity for a most daring sinner, that, when God had brought him so low, when so many enemies waged war against him and distressed him; yet, even then, he provoked a greater enemy than they all, and challenged God against him: *This is that king Ahaz.* Truly, may it not be said of many among us, "This and this is that person, who, when God afflicted them, instead of humbling themselves under the mighty hand of God, grew enraged at their sufferings, and sinned yet more and more against him?" Oh, it is dreadful, when those punishments, that should break

and melt us, prove only to harden our hearts, and to exasperate and embitter our spirits against God. What can reform us, when we offend under the very smart of the rod? Hereby, therefore, judge of your sins: if so be God be gone out against you, if he have laid his hand heavy upon you; and yet you regard it not, but still persevere in your old sins, and still add new iniquities to them; if, instead of humility and brokenness of hearts, your hearts rise up against God, and you are ready to say with that wicked king, *This evil is of the Lord: why should I wait upon the Lord any longer?* conclude upon it, you are those desperate presumptuous sinners, that scorn to shrink for whatever God can lay upon them.

5. *When we can encourage ourselves with hopes of mercy, though we live in sin impenitently; this is to sin presumptuously.*

You, that know yourselves to be sinners, what is it, that makes you to bear up with so much peace and confidence? Why do you not every moment fear, lest hell should open its mouth and swallow you up; lest God should suddenly strike you dead by some remarkable judgment; lest the Devil should fetch you away alive to torments? Why do you not fear this, since you know yourselves to be sinners? Why, truly, you still hope for mercy. And it is only from this very presumption, that men cry Peace, Peace to themselves; when yet God is at enmity with them: they flatter themselves that it shall be well with them in the latter end, though God swears he will not spare them; but his wrath and jealousy small smoke against them. In Deut. xxix. 19, 20, God says, If any man shall encourage himself when he goes on presumptuously in the way of his own heart, adding *drunkenness to thirst, I will not spare him;* but my wrath and my *jealousy shall smoke against* him; *and all the curses, that are written in this book, shall* fall *upon him.* Were but sinners truly apprehensive of their wretched estate, how they stand liable every moment to the stroke of divine justice, how that there is nothing that interposeth betwixt them and hell but only God's temporary forbearance of them; truly, it were impossible, to keep them from running up and down the streets, like distracted persons and madmen, crying out with horror of soul, "Oh, I am damned, I am damned:" but their presumption stupifies them, and they are lulled asleep by the Devil; and, though they live in sin, yet they still dream of salvation: and thus their presumption flatters them, till, at length, this presumption ends then, where their damnation begins, and never before.

And thus I have, in Five* Particulars, showed you what it is,

* Printed *six* in the first edition: the *fourth* and *fifth* heads being printed *fifth* and *sixth*. which mistakes are carelessly followed in the folio. EDITOR.

that makes a sin to be presumptuous; which is that, which David, in the Text, prays to God to keep him from: and, I doubt not, but these particulars have represented to you so much guilt and ugliness in Presumptuous Sins, as that you also pray with him, *Lord, keep* us *also from Presumptuous Sins.*

II. Now, though possibly it may seem altogether needless to die scarlet redder; yet, that your prayers against them may be more importunate, and your endeavours unwearied, I shall, in the next place, by SOME AGGRAVATING CONSIDERATIONS engrain these scarlet crimson sins, and strive to make them appear, as they are in themselves, out of measure sinful.

i. Consider, therefore, in the first place, that THE COMMISSION OF PRESUMPTUOUS SINS DOTH EXCEEDINGLY HARDEN AND STEEL THE HEART, WITH RESOLUTIONS TO PERSEVERE IN THEM WITHOUT REPENTANCE.

And what can be more dreadful than this is? Resolvedness to sin is a disposition likest to that of the Devil; and it is a punishment next to that of hell. A man, that is confirmed in wickedness, is not many removes off from a devil, in his nature; and from a damned person, in his state. There is a fatal consequence, betwixt man's resolving to continue in sin to the end, and God's resolving to punish him with those torments that shall have no end.

God hath two seals: the one, of the Spirit of Adoption, whereby he seals up believers *to the day of redemption;* and, the other, of Obduration, whereby he seals up the impenitent to the day of destruction: he seals them up under sin, and sets them aside for wrath. Hence the Apostle, in Romans ii. 5, speaks of a hard *and impenitent heart,* treasuring up wrath unto itself *against the day of wrath.*

Now presumptuous sins have a twofold malign influence, thus to harden and make men resolute in wickedness: for, either, they make them secure under sin; or, else, quite contrary, desperate for sin: and both these strongly conduce to the hardening of the heart.

1. *The commission of Presumptuous Sins oftentimes make a sinner resolute and secure, under the blackest guilt the soul can contract, and the fearfullest threatenings God can denounce.*

Security under guilt arises from impunity. Sinners have read and heard terrible things against themselves, that *God will wound the hairy scalp of such as go on still in their* iniquities; that he will destroy the incorrigible suddenly, and that *without remedy:* but yet none of all this is executed: their heads, instead of being wounded, are crowned with blessings; and this speedy destruction still loiters: they neither feel terrors within, nor meet with trouble

without; and, therefore, as Solomon observes because they go unpunished they grow secure, in Eccl. viii. 11;—*Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.*

Carnal reason measures God's way of taking vengeance by its own. It is the custom of men, if they can, to revenge while an injury is warm. Delay and forbearance usually cool them into forgiveness: and, hence, Presumptuous Sinners argue, that, certainly were there any truth in God's threatenings, were there anything to be feared besides the huge noise they make, they should then have been exemplarily plagued, when they committed such and such a daring sin, while the provocation was fresh. And from this it is, that the worst of sinners, after the commission of some vile and crying sins, are, for a while, troubled with a trembling and tormenting conscience; that the threatenings, that are denounced, should fall upon them by some visible appearance, and some signal hand of God against them: but, when they see no such thing come of it, but their condition is prosperous and all their ways sun-shine; how doth this work with them? Truly, instead of admiring God's patience and long suffering, they despise his wrath; and scoff at those threatenings, that before they dreaded; and think none of them true, because none of them are felt.

We read of such bold sinners, as these are in 2 Peter, iii. 4, *Where is the promise of his coming?*.....do not *all things continue as they were?* So, these Presumptuous Sinners say in their hearts, "Where is the threatening of his coming against us? Do not all things continue with us as they were? Though preachers roar out whole pulpits'-full of hell and damnation, and singe our ears continually with fire and brimstone; making fearful clamours of death, hell, and damnation, and everlasting torments: yet all things are with us as they were. Is not the sun's light as cheering, the air's breath as refreshing, and the earth's womb as fruitful as it was?" Their greatest sins have not disturbed the least atom in the creation, nor moved so much as a hair of their head. For all that sudden and unavoidable destruction, that is denounced against them, they still flourish and prosper; and, because God doth not, as man revenge in the first heat, they think all threatenings are made rather to affright, than to do execution: and, hence it is, that they embolden and harden themselves in sin, and take up resolutions, that they will continue therein.

And that is the first way, how the commission of Presumptuous Sins brings men to resolutions of sinning, by making them regardless of divine threatenings.

2. *The frequent commission of Presumptuous Sins leaves men desperate; whereby they are hardened to continue in their sins.*

Nothing more fortifies resolution, than despair. Make a coward desperate, and you make him invincible. Now Presumptuous Sins usually end in desperate resolutions; they make men despair of ever gaining power over them, and of ever obtaining pardon for them.

(1) Men, that frequently commit Presumptuous Sins, despair of ever subduing them.

Let your own hearts make answer: when you have sinned presumptuously against your own consciences and God's known Law, have you not been ready to conclude, that it were as good for you to abandon yourselves over to the swing of such a lust, as still to strive thus in vain against it? When resolutions against sin prove unsuccessful, they commonly end in desperate resolutions to sin: and yet, truly, this is no other, than as if a man should therefore burn his house down about him, because it wants repairing. Are there none among us now, that, when we have sinned against light and against convictions, sit down under this despairing temptation, That it is in vain for us ever to make head against such a lust more: it will prevail; and why should we not, therefore, give ourselves to it? Truly, what you have been tempted unto, others have practised: and, because the stream of their corruptions is violent, they therefore spread out their arms to it, and suffer themselves to be carried down by it into the gulf of perdition; resolving to run after the stream and current of their own corruptions, because they find it so strong; despairing of ever subduing them, having been so often overcome by them.

(2) The frequent commission of Presumptuous Sins makes men despair of ever obtaining pardon for them; and that hardens them in resolutions to continue in them, and then they cry out with Cain, *My iniquity is greater than* can be forgiven.

Despair of pardon oftentimes exasperates to more and greater offences. As if a thief, when he is robbing of a man, should argue with himself, "If I am detected of this robbery, it will cost me my life; and, if I murder him, I can but lose my life:" just so do many argue: "My sins are already so many and so great, that I cannot avoid damnation for them: I see my name pricked down among reprobates: it is but in vain for me to struggle against my own fate and God's decrees: it is too nice a scruple, since God hath given me up to the Devil, for me not to give up myself to sin:" and, so, away they go to sin; and sin at random, desperately and resolvedly. Oh, horrid hardness! that when the thoughts of hell

use to quench and allay the wickedness of other men, when it is most furious; yet these wretches never think of hell, but that that eternal fire inflames their lusts, and the thoughts of their own destruction do even confirm them in the practice of those very sins that destroy them! And yet, to this pass doth the commission of Presumptuous Sins bring many a wretched soul in the world. Now resolution to sin, out of despair, is to sin as the Devil sins: indeed, it is to give the Devil's image in the soul its last flourish: the devils and the damned spirits, as they lie always smothering and burning in hell, so they always hear that dreadful sound "For ever thus: for ever thus;" and, because their chains are made strong and eternal by an Almighty decree, this makes them implacable: they fret, and look upward, and curse that God that hath plunged them into those torments, from which hell will never free them: this makes them desperate in their resolutions to sin, because they despair of ever bettering their condition. Beware, therefore, lest you also, by frequent commissions of Presumptuous Sins, be given up to hellish despair, such as this is; so to despair of mercy, as, at the same time, to provoke and defy justice.

And that is the First great danger of sinning presumptuously: it will make men resolute, either through security or through despair, to continue in sin.

ii. Presumptuous Sins, as they steel the heart with most desperate resolutions, so they also BRAZEN THE FACE WITH MOST SHAMELESS IMPUDENCY.

All shame ariseth from the apprehension of some evil suspected of us, or discovered in us; and the eyes, that can discover it, are either the eyes of God and Angels, or the eyes of Men like ourselves.

Now all presumptuous sinners are grown bold and impudent, as to God and Angels. Though God be present with them in the closest secresy, though his eye see them in the thickest darkness; yet this doth not at all overawe them: they dare sin, even before his face, that must judge them. And, if some of them be yet so modest, as to conceal their wickedness from the notice of men: yet they are also so foolish and bold, as not to regard God's seeing them; in comparison of whom, to sin in the sight of the whole world is but to sin in secret. But yet the frequency of presumptuous sinning will also quickly cause them, to abandon this shame too; and to outface the face of men, which they more dread than they do the face of God or angels.

The Lord himself takes notice of the impudency of such men: and, certainly, every sinner hath cause to blush, when God calls

him impudent. In Jeremiah vi. 15, says God, *Were they ashamed, when they had committed* all these abominations? *nay, they were not all ashamed, neither could they blush:* and, in Jer. iii. 3, they have *a whore's forehead,* and they *refuse to be ashamed:* and, in Isaiah iii. 9, *The show of their countenance,* says God, *doth witness against them: they declare their sin as Sodom; they hide it not.*

There are Three degrees of shamefulness in sinning, to which many of our grosser sinners do arrive.

1. *Those, that will dare to commit foul sins, even publicly and knowingly.*

Some men lose half the pleasure of their sins, unless others may know how wicked they are, and how far they dare to affront the Almighty. The swearer swears not in secret, where none can hear him; but in company, and calls men to witness as well as God. The drunkard reels in our streets, in mid-day; and is ready to discharge his vomit, in the faces of all that he meets with. Truly, presumptuous sinning will at last grow to public sinning. Not only at the Last Day, that, which hath been done in secret, shall be divulged upon the house-top; but, many times, even in this life: those sins, that, at first, wicked men durst not commit, but in secret where no eye saw them, after a while they are grown bolder, and will act and own before all men.

2. Others are advanced farther; and, not only sin openly, but *boast and glory in their sins.*

The Apostle, in Phil. iii 19, speaks of those, *whose glory* was *in their shame:* they boast, as if they had done some notable exploit; when, alas! they have only murdered a poor soul of their own, that lay drawing on towards its death before.

3. There are others so shameless, that *they boast of those very wickednesses, that they never dared to commit.*

As cowards brag of their exploits in such and such a combat, which yet they never durst engage in: so there are a generation in the world, who dare not, for the terror of their consciences, commit a sin, that yet will boast that they have committed it; as if it were a generous and honourable thing, to be called and accounted a daring sinner. Shall I call these Men, or Monsters rather, that boast of such things as make them more like devils than men? and yet, even to this height of profligate impudence, will Presumptuous Sins lead you. But, let all such know, God is resolved to try the foreheads of these men at the Last and Great Day of Judgment; and, in despite of all their swaggering and boldness, shame and everlasting confusion shall cover their faces, as impudent as they are now.

iii. Consider this: WHAT A FEARFUL THING IT WILL BE, IF GOD SHOULD CUT OFF SUCH MEN IN THE VERY ACT OF SOME PRESUMPTUOUS SIN, WITHOUT AFFORDING THEM ANY TIME AND SPACE OF REPENTANCE.

And have they any security, that God will not? What promise have they, that God will forbear them one moment longer? Nay, they have been often told, that God will make a speedy end with them; that he will *take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath:* as it is in Ps. lviii. 9: and, therefore, he strikes not, without giving them warning enough, though he strikes suddenly.

God hath two chief attributes, that he especially aims to glorify in all his transactions with men; his Mercy, and his Justice. These are the two great hinges, upon which all the frame of his Providence moves. The mighty affairs of eternal election and reprobation were first agitated, out of design to magnify mercy and justice; and all temporal concernments are governed in such a way, as may most advance these two attributes of mercy and justice.

Now Mercy hath already had a large share of glory, in forbearing after so many provocations; in waiting so long to be gracious; staying year after year, expecting your repentance: and, if you contemn the riches of God's grace and mercy still, have you not reason to fear it will be the turn of Justice to deal with you next?

And, believe, it, the commission of Presumptuous Sins gives God a fair opportunity, to glorify his justice upon you to the utmost: and why should you think God will lose such an advantage? All the world must needs fall down, and with trembling adore the just severity of God, when they see a notorious sinner cut off in the very act of some notorious and presumptuous wickedness. In Deut. xvii. 12, 13, when a presumptuous sinner is punished, says God, *all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously:* and, if so much glory will accrue to God by destroying you, why then should he spare you one moment longer than your next sin? This is the best use you can make of Presumptuous Sinners, even to set them up as examples and monuments of his wrath and vengeance to terrify others: and why should you think then, since his Mercy hath been glorified already to you in waiting and forbearing so long, that he will not upon the next sin you commit glorify his Justice also?

It may be, God hath begun to deal thus already with some of you. In the very midst of your sins, hath not the hand-writing of some remarkable judgment appeared against you? Hath not God smitten some of you in your persons, in your estates, or in your relations?

Well, take Christ's counsel: *Sin no more, lest a worst thing* befal *you;* lest, on the next provocation, he strike you through, and sink you to hell. Oh, consider what a fearful thing it is, while your souls are all on flame in the commission of sin, then for God to hurl them down into everlasting and unquenchable fire; as he may take just occasion and advantage to do, for the glorifying of his Justice.

iv. Consider this: IT IS VERY HARD TO BRING PRESUMPTUOUS SINNERS TO REFORMATION AND REPENTANCE.

The first step to evangelical sorrow, is legal terror; which the Spirit of God works, by convincing the sinner of judgment and wrath to come. But, tell a Presumptuous Sinner what judgment and wrath are due to him, that it is impossible for him to escape the vengeance of God, that justice will overtake him; read to him all the curses contained in the Book of God, and tell him that they are all entailed upon his sin: this moves him not: he knew and considered all this before. A Presumptuous Sinner must be a knowing sinner: he knows what hell is, as well as ever any man did, that hath not felt it: he knows what a precious soul he destroys, how glorious a heaven he forfeits, what dreadful condemnation he exposeth himself to: he knows all this, and yet he sins; and, though this were enough, one would think, to daunt a devil, yet he breaks through all this knowledge to his own lusts again. The Apostle speaks of such in Romans i. 32, *who knowing the judgment of God, that they, which commit such things, are worthy of death,* yet presumptuously continue in the commission of such sins. Now what hope is there, of reforming and reclaiming such as these are; that sin, after they have cast up their accounts what it will cost them? Certainly, they, that dare sin when they see hell before them, there is no hope that they will leave sinning, till they see hell flaming round about them, and themselves in the midst of it.

III. Now, though these Presumptuous Sins be in their nature and aggravations so heinous, yet ARE THE BEST CHRISTIANS EXCEEDING PRONE TO COMMIT THEM.

When the sea is tempestuous, did we only stand safe upon the shore, it were enough to behold the woeful shipwrecks of others with that horror and commiseration that such a spectacle deserves: but, when we are tossed in the same tempest, and see some split against rocks, and others swallowed up of quicksands, unto which naturally the stream strongly carries us also; truly, then, our pity and detestation of their dangers, our horror and consternation of their ruin, are not sufficient without great care and diligence for our own security and preservation.

Therefore, O Christians! look to yourselves. The glorified saints in heaven see the dangers they have escaped, with praise; and the dangers others fall into, with pity: but thou, O Christian! art not yet got to shore. Still thou sailest upon the same sea, wherein most do perish; even the raging sea of corruption, which is yet made more raging by the storms of temptation: and, if thou seest many, that are bound heaven-ward, make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, it is not enough for thee, to slight their dangers, or to censure and pity their miscarriages; but fear thou also, lest the same corruptions and temptations overwhelm and drown thee in the same perdition. This is the Apostle's caution: 1 Cor. x. 12; *Let him, that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall:* and, in Rom. xi. 20; *Thou standest by faith: be not high-minded, but fear.*

And, indeed, because of that violent inclination that is in all unto sin, there is no state in this life so perfect, as to make this exhortation useless and unseasonable. David himself prays for restraining grace: *Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.*

From which words I formerly collected,* and shall now prosecute this Proposition.

That, IN THE BEST CHRISTIANS, THERE IS GREAT PRONENESS TO THE WORST SINS.

In the handling of this so true a point, I shall, by some Demonstrations, make it evident, that there is a strong inclination in the best to the worst sins: and, then,

Search out the Original Cause, whence it is, that, since, in the first creation, man's will was left wholly free and indeterminate, without any other inclination to good or evil, besides what its free and arbitrary choice made; yet, in the new creation, whereby souls are repaired, there should be still left in it that bias that strongly sways it unto evil.

These Two things, God assisting, I shall at present do.

i. For the DEMONSTRATIONS of the point, I shall give you them in these following particulars.

1. *The Examples of others* may here be a convincing argument.

If I should summon in the most excellent of God's saints, a man might wonder that drunkenness, incest, murder, and abjuration of Christ, that such brats of Satan should ever be found in company with such an angelical troop as they are: and, yet, Noah is drunk, Lot is incestuous, David murders, and Peter abjures. These glorious stars have had their twinklings; and, if the leaders and champions are thus foiled, what may we think then hath in all ages be-

* See pp. 6, 7, of this volume. EDITOR.

fallen the crowd of vulgar Christians? We may, with truth and boldness, say, Never was there a sin committed in the world, how horrid soever, unless the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, but God may find it written down in his Book of Remembrance under their names, whose names he himself hath written down in the Book of Life. And, what! shall we say, when we see a stone falling, that there is no weight nor propenseness in it to fall? Shall we say, when we see such eminent Christians falling into sin, yea even into great and gross sins, that they have not strong propensions and inclinations to sin?

Yet, O ye Saints, divulge not these things to wicked men: whisper them softly one to another, with fear and trembling, lest some profane wretch or other overhear you, and take that for encouragement that was only meant for caution. What is more common, than for the vilest sinners to plead for their excuse, or warrant rather, the foul miscarriages of God's dearest saints? Thus, the drunkard looks upon holy Noah as a pot-companion; whereby he discovers his nakedness in a worse sense than ever Ham did: and, thus, the unclean sensualist quotes David, and calls him in to be the patron of his debauchery: certainly, if there be any grief that can overcast the perfect joys of the saints in heaven, it is, that their names and examples should, to the great dishonour of God, be produced by wicked and sinful men, to countenance their grossest sins and wickednesses. But, let such know, that though God hath set up these in his Church to be monuments of his mercy, to declare to humble and penitent sinners how great sins he can pardon; yet, if any hereupon embolden themselves in sin, instead of being set up as monuments of mercy, God will set them up as pillars of salt.

2. It appears, that there is a strong proneness in the best to the worst sins, from *those frequent and pressing Exhortations, that are given us in Scripture, to watchfulness against them, and to the mortification of them.*

Wherefore were these curbs necessary, but that God sees our lusts are headstrong, and ready to fly out and hurry us into all excesses?

Nay, these exhortations are not so particularly, nor with so great emphasis, given to the wicked, as they are to the children of God. Of the wicked God saith, He, that will be wicked, let him be wicked still: that is all the care God takes of them; as we use to say of them, that we despair to reclaim, Nay, let them take their own courses. But he especially warns and exhorts the godly to beware of those sins, that one would think a godly man were scarce liable to commit.

See how Christ cautions his disciples: Luke xxi. 34: *Take heed to yourselves*, says he, *lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and* the *cares of this life.* Would not any man wonder, that our Saviour should so solicitously warn them against surfeiting and drunkenness, which are the sins usually of a plentiful estate? but, what! warn them, against these sins, whose poverty was such and was to be such, that those, that gave unto them a cup of cold water, should receive a plentiful reward for their pains! Were they in such danger, to be surfeited by the one, and drunk with the other? And, what! they like to be choked with the cares of this life, and with carking to get what they had not, who had but just before renounced all that they had to follow Christ! Yea, but Christ knew, that, even in these poor abstemious disciples, there was a natural proneness to gluttony, and rioting, and drunkenness; and, therefore, he thus exhorts them: and he doth it, that grace may keep them from inclining to these sins, as their low and persecuted condition should be sure to keep them from committing them.

So also the Apostle, in Col, iii. 5, speaking to them, that should certainly appear with Christ in glory, as you may see in verse 4, yet these he commands to *mortify* their *members* that were *upon the earth.* But what members are these? It may be they are only vanity and inconstancy of thoughts, levity and unfixedness of affections, deadness and heaviness of heart, and such other less sins, that, should they be perfectly free from, they should be perfectly holy. No, says the Apostle: these members are the big limbs of the Old Man: they are *fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness.* And, in verse 8, he exhorts them again, to *put off all these* things; *anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication,* and lying: and so he goes on reckoning up foul and horrid sins; and exhorts them to mortify these sins, who were to appear with Christ in glory. Those, who never lived in them, not at least after their conversion, is it not strange, that such eminent Christians as these were, should need exhortations against such foul sins? There are many persons in a state of nature, that would count their morals much wronged, if you should be officiously importunate with them, not to commit adultery or blasphemy, not to be covetous or drunkards, or the like: this they would look upon as an injury done to them, that you should suspect such things as these are of them: would not they say, as Hazael did to the prophet, What! are thy servants dogs, that they should do such great things as these are? But the Apostle knew that the inclinations of the best

were too strong; even to those sins, that a perfect moralist would think scorn that they should be suspected of: and, therefore, he exhorts them, with all earnestness and frequent importunity, to mortify such foul sins as these are.

3. It appears, also, from *the Irritating Power, that the Law hath.*

Even in the best of God's children, there is accidentally, through our corruption, such a malign influence, if I may so call it, in the holy, just, and good Law of God, that instead of quelling sin, it doth the more enrage and provoke it: and this we call the Irritating Power of the Law. Thus, the Apostle tells us in Rom. vii. 8, that sin takes occasion by the Law, to work in us *all manner of concupiscence.*

Now were it possible, that sin should grow strong by that Law that was given on purpose to destroy it, but that there are in us violent propensions towards what is forbidden us, and eager desires after that which God hath denied us? So strangely depraved are our corrupt natures, that we swell with our yoke, and labour to throw off whatever may lay a restraint upon us: like green sticks, being bent one way, by natural strength we start as far back the other way. Can none of us call to mind some sins, that possibly we should never have committed, had they not been forbidden to us? The command oftentimes gives corruption a hint, in what and how it may offend God. And is not this therefore a clear demonstration of that mighty proneness that there is in all of us unto sin, when that Law, that forbids sin, shall prove an incentive to it? The more will a high-mettled horse foam and fling, the harder you rein him in. And if you stop a river in its course, it will rise and swell till it overflows its banks: and whence is this, but because there is a natural proneness in it to run towards the sea? And when God casts his Law before men as a stop to them in their sinful course, they swell the higher, till they have borne away or overflown all those bounds and dams, that God hath set to bound them in. And whence proceeds all this, but only because there is a natural tendency and propension in men's hearts to sin? and, therefore, the more they are opposed, the higher still do their corruptions swell, and the more do they rage. And, although the force of this sinful propension may be, in some of God's children, in a good measure broken; yet, in the very best of them, is there some degree or other of this Irritating Power of the Law, to stir them up to sin, even by forbidding them to sin.

And that is the Last Demonstration.

ii. The next thing propounded, was to enquire into the ORIGINAL

CAUSE, WHENCE THIS SINFUL INCLINATION PROCEEDS; how it comes to pass, that there is, in all men, and even in the best Christians, such a strong propension unto sin.

In the enquiry into this, I shall lead you on gradually, by these following steps.

1. *In man's first creation, the will had in it a natural power to determine the specification of its own acts;* that is, freely to sway itself either unto good or evil, which of them it pleased; and, if there was any bias in it to draw it more one way than another, as some there was, it was an inclination to that which is good.

For man's faculties were then entire and perfect: his knowledge clear, to discern what was his chief good, and his highest happiness: his will free, to choose it; and his affections ready, to embrace and clasp about it. His love, his fear, his joy, his delight, were all of them centered in God: that, which is now in us from grace, was in him from nature.

Since the Fall, we need a twofold assistance. One, a Common Influence and Assistance; such, as is vouchsafed to all men, to enable them to the performance of the common and ordinary actions of this life: it is from God's immediate influence, that we are enabled to move, to think, to speak; *for in him we live, and move, and have our being.* And then we need also a Special Influence, vouchsafed only to the children of God: whereby we are enabled to perform holy and spiritual actions; as to love, fear, and obey God sincerely: and this special influence we commonly call grace; whereby we are enabled to act divinely and spiritually.

Now the difference betwixt Common and Special Influence lies in this: that what God works in us by a common influence, is wrought without any grudge or reluctancy in man's nature to the contrary; but what is wrought in us by a special influence, is brought to pass, nature gainsaying and contradicting. Thus, when God enables a sinner to act faith, or love, or any divine and heavenly grace, this is contrary to the tendency of corrupt nature, and therefore this is called Special Grace.

Now while man stood in the state of innocency, there was nothing in his nature, that contradicted his fear of God, his dependence on God, or his love to God; and, therefore, to enable him to act all these, he needed no special influence of special grace, but only of a common and ordinary providence. Before the Fall, Adam stood in no need at all of any such thing as that special grace of which we now stand in need; but the same assistance of God, for the kind of it, that enabled him to move, or to speak, or to think, was suf

ficient also to enable him to perform the most spiritual obedience: because, then, the most spiritual obedience was no more to him, than those actions which we call natural, as eating, and drinking, walking, and thinking, are to us now; and, therefore, he required no more assistance from God for the performance of spiritual obedience, than we now require from God for our natural actions. Now, as he had this perfection of power to perform what was good; so, he had a proneness of will also to it: but, yet, in that proneness there was not perseverance: he might, as afterwards he did, turn aside from God unto Satan; and, notwithstanding his inclination to obedience and proneness to that which was good, yet, having not a perseverance in that proneness, but being lord over his own will as he was over the rest of the visible creation, he voluntarily and wilfully consented to the commission of sin.

2. *This voluntary inclination of Adam to sin hath ever since, by a dreadful yet righteous judgment of God, brought upon all his posterity a natural and necessary inclination unto sin: so that now, either whatever they do is sin, or there is sin in whatever they do.*

That we may clearly apprehend how Adam's first sin and provocation, committed so many thousand years ago, causes such strong propensions to sin in all his posterity, you must observe these following particulars.

(1) We and all mankind were in Adam, not only as in our common parent, from whom we received our being; but as in our common head, surety, and representative, from whom we were to receive either our well or our ill being.

He was the head of the covenant. Both he and we were parties in the covenant: he obeying, we obeyed; and, he sinning, we transgressed: what he did, as in this public capacity, was not alone his personal act, but it was ours also. Now what right Adam had to indent for his posterity, and to oblige them to the terms of the covenant, I have long since opened to you on another occasion,* and I shall therefore pass it by now.

(2) The threatening annexed to the Covenant of Works was death. *In the day that thou eatest thereof,* says God, *thou shalt surely die:* Gen. ii. 17.

There is a threefold death, that, by the violation of this command, man was subject unto: a Temporal death; consisting in the miseries of this life, and, at last, in a separation of the soul from

* This probably refers to "The Doctrine of the Two Covenants," where the subject is fully discussed. That Treatise was not published, however, till several years after this Discourse. EDITOR.

the body: an Eternal death; consisting in the everlasting separation of the soul from God: and a Spiritual death; consisting in the loss and separation of God's image from the soul. And, upon Adam's sin, this threefold death was threatened; namely temporal, spiritual, and eternal. Of these three, the spiritual death was presently inflicted upon man's fall; consisting in the separation of the image of God from the soul: man was immediately deprived of that holiness and perfect righteousness, wherein the image of God did consist.

3. *No action can be holy, that doth not flow from the image of God in the soul, as from its principle.*

Every action is sinful, that hath not the glory of God for its end. Now no action can have the glory of God for its end, that hath not the image of God for its principle: and, therefore, man being despoiled of this image of God, there is no action of any man in the state of nature, but what is sinful and corrupt. And hence it is, that, in regeneration, God again stamps his image upon the soul: not, indeed, so perfectly as at man's first creation; but, yet, in such a degree, as doth, through grace, enable him to act holily, and in some measure according to the will of God.

4. *Though man be despoiled of the image of God, and cannot act holily; yet he is a busy and active creature, and must and will be still acting. He hath an active nature, and he hath active faculties, still left him; though the image of God, that should make those actions holy, is justly taken from him.*

And here, at last, we have traced out the true cause of that strong propension, that there is in all men unto sin. While the soul enjoyed the image of God, it sought especially to do all in reference unto God: but, now that it hath lost that image, it cannot any longer raise up its actions to a suitableness to the will of God; and therefore now it sinks them, and seeks only to please its own carnal desires and appetite. Take the whole resolution of it in two or three words. The nature of the soul makes it prone and inclined to act; for it is a busy, active creature: and, if it acts, it must sin; because it hath not the image of God to raise its actions to a holy and divine conformity to the will of God: and, therefore, now to be prone to act, is to be prone to sin, and this is the true ground of that strong propension, that is in all men, to that, which is evil and sinful.

But, you will say, "if this proneness to sin be from the loss of God's image, how comes it to pass, that those, who are renewed again according to the image of God, do still complain of this strong proneness and propension to sin?"

To this I answer, that in those of fallen mankind, to whom God is pleased to restore his image in regeneration, accordingly as this image is more or less perfect so is this proneness to sin more or less strong; but, because the best are but in part renewed, therefore this sinful proneness is but in part destroyed in the best: grace weakens it ,but grace doth not quite remove it; and therefore the holiest Christain hath and shall have as long as he lives in this world, cause to complain, with the Apostle, Rom. vii. 23, *I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind.* There is a carnal, sensual inclination in him; strongly swaying him to sin, contrary to the bent and inclination of his renewed part: and, therefore, he shall have cause still to cry out, with the Apostle, *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* Because the image of God is but in part restored in him, therefore there is partly also an inclination in him to sin.

Yea, but you will say, "Possibly this inclination, in the best Christians, may be to smaller and lesser sins; but it cannot be thought, that a child of God, who is renewed again according to the image of God, should have a strong proneness and inclination to those foul sins, that the wicked of the world lie in."

To this I answer: The most that grace doth, in the best of God's children, in this life, is, to weaken and lessen that natural propension, that is in a child of God to every sin; but not to destroy that propension to any one sin at all, no not to the foulest and vilest sins. The Old Man, in this life, never loseth one limb; though it be weakened and consuming away in his whole body. Take a child of God, that, before his conversion, had a strong propension to any sin; suppose what sin you will, though never so foul and horrid: the same propension still remains: it is not indeed so violent and raging as it was; but there it is: it is abated and overcome by grace; but still there is the same proneness to sin. It may be, a Christian is not so sensible of this propension to sin, nor so frequently as formerly he hath been: but, yet, the experience of the best sometimes can inform them, that, even to the worst sins and most horrid temptations, they find a faction and party in their hearts to promove them; and, it is as much work as grace can do, to subdue and quell these great sins.

iii. I now come to enquire into the GROUNDS AND REASONS, WHY GOD SHOULD SUFFER THIS PRONENESS TO SIN TO CONTINUE IN HIS DEAREST SAINTS AND CHILDREN, AFTER THEIR CONVERSION AND REGENERATION.

Possibly, some may think it would have been more conducible

to God's glory, as well as to their own peace and comfort, if God had at once, at their first conversion, utterly destroyed all seeds and remainders of corruption in them, and at first made them as perfectly holy as they shall be at last. Hereby, God would not have been so provoked as he is, nor his Spirit so grieved, nor the Devil so rejoiced, at the daily miscarriages of the best Christians. Wherefore is it, that God hath perfected the saints now in glory, but that they might yield him perfect obedience and service? Why, truly our services would be as perfect and as well pleasing unto God as theirs are, were our imperfect natures as theirs are; and, therefore, God would have had a double heaven, an upper and a lower heaven, had he but destroyed sin in us upon earth: and, since it might seem so much to redound to his glory, why hath he not consummated our sanctification; but hath still left thorns in our eyes, and goads in our sides, with which not only we but he himself also is grieved and vexed? What should be the reason of this?

To answer this question: you must know the general and comprehensive reason thereof, is his own sovereign, unaccountable good-will and pleasure; into which the reason of all things is most rationally resolved: and, therefore, that, among all mankind that lay all alike in the same mass of corruption, some are sanctified and some are not; that, among them that are sanctified some are sanctified in one degree and some in another, and yet none so perfectly as to be freed from sin; the best of God's saints may rest satisfied in this: it is God's good pleasure, to give forth his grace in such a measure; to some more, to some less; as shall only weaken, not utterly destroy, the corruptions of his people. Therefore the Apostle, in Heb. x. 10, speaking of Christ's coming to do the will of God, *by the which will*, says he, *we are sanctified.* That we are sanctified, when others are not, is from the will of God: that we are sanctified in such a measure, not more nor less, must be resolved into the sovereign and uncontrollable will of God: *by the which will we are sanctified.*

And yet, there are also many wise ends and reasons of this will of God, why he should leave still such sinful propensions and corrupt inclinations, even in the best of his people. As,

1. Hereby, *God maintains a beauty and harmony in the works of grace, as well as in the works of nature.*

The beauty and harmony of the universe consists in gradation; whereby, as by little steps or rounds, we ascend from one kind of being to another. Thus, God hath placed man in the world, as it were a middle step betwixt brute creatures and angels; and, there-

fore, he partakes somewhat of the nature of both: his soul and his intellectual part—that, is made like the nature of angels: and then there is in him a sensitive part, desires and propensions; and, on this side, he is akin even to the beasts that perish. So is it also in the works of grace: a Christian is, as it were, a step betwixt a wicked man and an angel: a wicked man hath no grace, and a holy angel hath no sin: now to make up this great gap, God hath placed a Christian as a middle step betwixt them, to tack and unite the moral world together: there is in him a heavenly and spiritual part; and, by that, he is of affinity to the angels: and there are also in him sinful desires and sinful inclinations; and, by these he holds hands with wicked men, and is thereby joined to them. And thus God illustrates his wisdom, in causing such an admirable harmony and gradual difference in the works of grace: bringing men out of a state of mere sinful nature, to a state of grace mixed with sin; and, from a state of mixed grace, to a state of pure and complete grace, where, at last, a Christian shall be fully consummated, and be as the angels of God. Thus, from step to step, God gradually carries on the work of sanctification to perfection; and, hereby, he maintains an admirable beauty and harmony in the works of grace, as well as in the works of nature. This sets forth the beauty of the world, that there is such a conveyance from one kind of creatures to another: whereby they touch one another, and are tacked together by several orders, as inanimate and sensitive; then, rational, as men; then, intellectual, as angels. So also is it in grace: from a wicked man, to a saint, partly wicked and partly gracious: from a saint on earth, to a saint in heaven; where the imperfect work of grace, here on earth, is swallowed up by perfect grace and holiness.

2. Therefore doth God suffer sinful inclinations to remain in the best Christians, *that he might have wherewithal continually to exercise the graces of his people.*

Some graces are Graces of War, if I may so call them; which would never be exercised, if we had not enemies to encounter with. And, therefore, as it is said in Judges iii. 2, that God would not utterly drive out all the nations before the children of Israel, but left some of them among them, that, by continual combating and fighting with them, they might learn war: so neither hath God utterly expelled the Spiritual Canaanites out of the hearts of his people, to this end, that, by daily conflicting with them, they might learn *the wars of the Lord,* and might grow expert in the handling and using every piece of their Spiritual and Christian Armour. How should we keep a holy watch and ward, if we had no enemies

to beat up our quarters? and how should we exercise faith, which St. John tells us is our *victory*, if we had no enemies to conquer? and should we exercise repentance and godly sorrow, whereby the soul is recruited and whereby its graces are reinforced again, if so be we were never foiled nor overcome by our spiritual enemies? Part of our spiritual armour would soon rust, but that our corruptions and sinful inclinations put us daily upon a necessity of using it. Shortly, when we come to heaven, we shall have no need nor use of these graces: there, we shall be out of the reach of all enemies: and, therefore, God is resolved to exercise these graces here, and suffers corruption to abide in this life; that so, grace, making way through this corruption, may enter into heaven, where it shall for ever rest and triumph. These warring graces of the saints have no time nor place to be exercised in, but only in this life: and, because God will have all the parts of holiness have their due exercise, therefore hath he left these corruptions in the soul, that their warring graces might have enemies to encounter with. And,

3. *Hereby also the almighty power of God is exceedingly glorified, in preserving us, through faith, unto salvation; notwithstanding our own violent inclination and proneness to sin, unto our own destruction.* Though St. Peter, when he walked upon dry land, was upheld by the power of Christ, as God: yet that power was not so remarkably glorious, in his preservation and walking upon the dry land; as when Christ lent him his hand and upheld him from sinking, when he walked and stood upon the surface of the water; because then he had a proneness and propension in him to sink, more than when he stood upon the dry land. So, truly, I may say that the standing of the glorified saints in heaven in a state of holiness, although it may be and is a work of God's almighty power: yet it seems not altogether so much to magnify the power of God, in preserving them in that state of holiness and glory, no not to eternity; as it doth to preserve a poor weak Christian one day in a state of grace: because there is no proneness in a glorified saint, to fall from his happiness into sin; but there is in a saint on earth, to fall from grace, and from the work of God upon his soul.

4. *This glorifies also the prevalency of Christ's intercession, and the triumph of God's pardoning grace and mercy.*

Oh, how exceedingly glorious is free grace! in that God can and doth, for Christ's sake, pardon many and great sins, though he certainly knows there is such a sinful propension left behind in man's nature, that will again be breaking out into the same or greater provocations!

iv. The APPLICATION of this point shall be in these particulars.

1. Is there so strong a proneness in the best Christians, to the worst sins? Hence, then, *Let wicked men learn, not to insult over them when they fall, nor to reproach holiness with their foul miscarriages.*

Truly, grace hath always found it ill-neighbourhood, to dwell in the same soul with sin: for wicked men, being themselves all of one piece, know not how to distinguish betwixt the propensions of the one and of the other: they know not how to distinguish when the Saint in a Christian acts, and when the Sinner: and, so, they very irrationally charge holiness with those crimes, that, were they not in part unholy, they should never commit. When a man, that makes a forward profession of religion, and in the general course of his life makes conscience of his ways, doth, through temptation or inadvertency, fall into some sin that becomes notorious; what is more common in the mouths of profane scoffers, than this? "This is one of your godly ones! This is one of the sanctified gang!" Thus they laugh and sneer at him. But, sinner, let me tell thee, thou mistakest the man. Did you ever hear him pray so as to charm heaven; and, which is more, so as to melt even your hearts into affection? Did you ever hear him discourse of spiritual things, as if he had been intimate with angels, and one of heaven's secretaries? Have you formerly observed in him a blameless and exemplary conversation? then, indeed, you might say this is one of the godly: holiness owns him, religion glories in him, while he thus adorns his profession; but, when he sins, say not, "Behold one of the godly:" this is blasphemy against religion. No: it is not the godly man that sins: no; it is the corrupt and and unholy part in him: it is that part in him, that is most like to thee. In Romans vii. 17, says the Apostle, *It is no more I, but sin that dwelleth in me.* And, if it be indwelling sin that is the cause of actual sin in the best, why then do you belie their graces? Why do you accuse them, whom the Apostle vindicates; telling you plainly, that it is not they, but sin in them? Learn, therefore, to put a difference betwixt a Saint and a Sinner in every child of God: and, if it be the sinner in them, that exposeth them to your scorns and flouts, what else do you in upbraiding of them, but more upbraid yourselves, that are nothing but sinners throughout? Judge, therefore, how senseless and unreasonable it is for you to reproach them, whom, were they not so much like you, you would have nothing to reproach with. Therefore, let wicked men never more flout and jeer at the falls and sins of those, that are holy; imputing them to

them, as holy: for it is the sinner in them that sins, and not the saint; and, by upbraiding them for sin, they do more upbraid and reproach themselves.

2. Is there such a strong propension, in the best, to the worst sins? *See, then, what cause even the best have, to be continually humble.* Oh, this is that, which breaks the very heart, and rends the very bowels of a true Christian, that he should be so violently inclined to that, which, of all things in the world, his God is most averse to; and which, of all things in the world, as it is the only thing he never made, so it is that which he always hates. This is that, which makes him smite his breast with anguish; and cry out, with the Apostle, *O wretched man that I am!*

And well, truly, may the best saint call himself a *wretched man*, since he carries that in his bosom, that will be a perpetual torment and vexation to him as long as he lives. There are factions and rebellions, intestine discords and civil wars within; *the flesh* lusting *against the Spirit, and the Spirit* lusting *against the flesh:* there is a sea of wickedness; and yet, in the midst of it, true grace, like fire, striving to burn it up. Nay, no wonder this great combustion makes such a smoke and smother, as wrings tears from his eyes. For, when he meditates, this chokes his meditation: he begins with God; but, through this sinful proneness, he falls, he knows not how, into some impertinent thought or other, and in a moment slides from heaven to earth: his thoughts are like ravelled thread: he knows not the method, order, nor end of them. When he prays, this corruption sits very heavy upon his heart: and as, at the evening, the shadow of the body moves much faster; so, truly, many times, the lips move apace in prayer, when yet the heart is dull and drowsy. Wherever he is, whatever he is about, lust is intruding into his company: corruption will be thrusting itself into all his actions. This is that, which makes him weary of his very life, so that he could very well be content, nay he really and heartily wishes from his heart, that this house of clay were pulled down about him.

Truly, when we look abroad into the world, and take notice in what filthy sins it wallows; what oaths and cursings, what blasphemies and drunkenness, what murders, uncleannesses, and riots have every where overspread the face of the whole earth; what do we see, but the effects of that sinful nature, that is common to us, as well as unto them? There we see our own hearts unbowelled; and there we can discern what ourselves are, at the cost of other men's sins. What says the Wise Man, in Prov. xxvii. 19? *As in*

*water, face answereth to face; so* doth *the heart of* a *man to* a *man.* It was the proud Pharisee's boast, Lord, *I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican:* as it is in Luke xviii. 11. Yes, believe it, you, and I, and all, yea the best of us all, are even as others are. The vilest sinners are the truest glasses to represent to our view what our hearts are. Their wickedness gives in a true inventory of what lies locked up in our breasts: there, we have the same vipers knotting and sprawling within, that crawl forth in others' lives: there, are rancour, and malice, and hatred, and slaughters, and adulteries; and the whole spawn of all those black sins, that have made men either infamous in story, or mighty in torment. And, that we have not yet outsinned all the copies that ever were set us, that we have not yet discovered some new unknown wickedness to the world, is not because our inclination to sin or our stock of corruption fails us; but because God's grace, either preventing or renewing, fails not.

Where then is the Christian, that hath not cause to go mourning to his grave? Can you blame him, when you see him sad and disconsolate; when he hath no less reason for it, than a heart brimfull of sin? Certainly, that man neither loves God, nor his own soul, that can hear that there is in him such a violent propension to injure the one and ruin the other, without exclaiming, with the Prophet, *Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of* an *unclean* heart and of polluted *lips!* It is but just, yea it is all the reason in the world, that, while our hearts continue to be fountains of sin, our heads should continue to be fountains of tears.

3. Is there, in the best, a strong proneness to the worst sins? *What cause have we then, to long and breathe after heaven!*

For, not till then, shall we be free from it. Indwelling sin hath taken a lease of our souls, and holds them by our own lives: it will be in us to the last gasp; and, as the heart is the last that dies, so also is that corruption that lodgeth in it. But, yet, die it must, and die it shall: and this is the comfort of a child of God, that, though he brought sin with him into the world, yet he shall not carry it with him out of the world. God hath so wisely ordered and appointed it, that, as death came in by sin, so also shall sin itself be destroyed by death: as worms, when they creep into their holes, leave their slime and their dirt behind them; truly, so is it with a Christian: when he dies, he leaves all his slime, all his filth and corruption, at the mouth of the grave; and his soul gets free from that clog, and mounts up into the bosom of God: and there alone is it, that it shall no more strive and struggle against sinful

propensions and inclinations: there, shall it be eternally fixed and confirmed, not only in glory, but in holiness also: we shall there be out of the reach of Satan's temptations. We read, indeed, that sometimes the Devil appears before God, as an accuser; but we never read, that he comes there as a tempter; we shall no more feel the first risings and steamings-up of corruption, there: no more shall we cast kind glances upon our sins, nor have hovering thoughts towards them. O blessed necessity, when the soul shall be tied up to one all-satisfying good! when it shall have as natural a proneness and ardour to delight in God, as to love itself, and to delight in its own happiness! And who then would desire to linger any longer here below; and to spin out his wretched life, wherein sin and sorrow shall have the greatest share? Here the best of us are in perpetual combats and quarrels betwixt sin and grace: the one will not yield, and the other cannot: corruption compels one way, and grace commands another. Haste, therefore, O Christian, out of this scuffle: make haste to heaven, and there the controversy will be for ever decided: there, shalt thou no more live in fear of new sins, nor yet in sorrow for old sins; but all sorrow and sighing shall flee away: all tears shall be wiped from our eyes, and all sin shall be rooted out of our hearts; and we shall be perfectly holy, even as the angels themselves.

4. Is there such a strong proneness, in the best, to the worst sins? *This then should teach us, carefully to avoid all temptations to sin, and whatever may be an occasion to draw forth that corruption that lies latent within us.*

Wherefore is it, that one petition, of those few that Christ taught his disciples, was, that God would not lead them into temptation; but because he knew that there are in all of us sinful natures, that do too, too well correspond with temptations? And he knew, that, if we were brought into temptations, it is very seldom that we are brought off from them without sin.

Were we as free from inherent sin, as Adam was at first; or, were we confirmed in grace, as the saints in heaven now are; we might then repel all temptations with ease: and therefore our Saviour, whose nature was spotless by an extraordinary conception, and whose holiness was secure to him by an unspeakable union of the godhead, tells us, in John xiv. 30, *the prince of this world* came, *and* found *nothing* in him. The Devil came to tempt him; but, because he found nothing in him, therefore he could fasten nothing upon him: no temptation could enter, because there was no corruption to receive it; and, therefore, when he tempted Christ, he only cast

*fiery darts* against an impenetrable rock; a rock, that will beat them back again into his own face.

But our corruptions have made us combustible matter, that there is scarce a dart thrown at us in vain: when he tempts us, it is but like the casting of fire into tinder, that presently catcheth: our hearts kindle upon the least spark that falls; as a vessel, that is brimfull of water, upon the least jog, runs over. Were we but true to ourselves, though the Devil might knock, by his temptations; yet he could never burst open the everlasting doors of our hearts, by force or violence: but, alas! we ourselves are not all of one heart and one mind: Satan hath got a strong party within us, that, as soon as he knocks, opens to him, and entertains him. And, hence is it, that, many times, small temptations and very petty occasions draw forth great corruptions: as a vessel, that is full of new liquor, upon the least vent given, works over into foam and froth; so, truly, our hearts, almost upon every slight and trivial temptation, make that inbred corruption, that lodgeth there, swell, and boil, and run over into abundance of scum and filth in our lives and conversations.

Have we not great cause, therefore, to be jealous and suspicious of ourselves; and to keep a watchful eye over all the motions of those bosom-traitors, our own hearts? *He, that trusteth to his own heart,* says Solomon, *is a fool:* Prov. xxviii. 26. Certainly, it were the greatest folly in the world, to trust our hearts, after so frequent experience of their treachery and slipperiness. Venture them not, therefore, upon temptations. What security have you, that your sinful hearts will not sin; yea and, it may be, betray you into such great abominations, as you cannot now think of without horror?

As men presume upon the mercy of God, to pardon their lesser sins; so they presume also upon their own strength, to preserve them from greater sins. They say of small sins, "Is it not a little one, and our souls shall live?" And they say of great sins, "Is it not a great one, and our souls shall never commit it?" Alas! how know you, but, if once you lay your head in the lap of a temptation, these Philistines will be upon you? and you, like Sampson, think to go and shake yourselves, as at other times: but, alas! your great strength is departed from you; and you, left a prey to the foulest and worst of sins.

And thus now you have seen in David's prayer, the best saints' proneness to the worst sins.

IV. The next thing observable is, THE BEST SAINTS' WEAKNESS AND INABILITY TO PRESERVE THEMSELVES, WITHOUT THE ASSISTANCE OF DIVINE GRACE.

And both these, namely, their proneness to commit sin, and their weakness to resist it, are evident demonstrations of the general proposition: The Almighty grace of God is their best, yea and their only security.

Now, as the bottom and foundation of this present exercise, I shall lay down this point to be treated of.

THAT IT IS NOT A CHRISTIAN'S OWN, BUT GOD'S POWER ONLY, THAT CAN PRESERVE HIM FROM THE COMMISSION OF THE MOST DARING AND PRESUMPTUOUS SINS.

And yet, truly, if any sins are easy to be resisted and overcome, they are the sins of the grosser sort: for, many times, it is with sins, as with overgrown bodies; the vaster the bulk of them is, the less is their force and activity.

i. THE SOUL HATH GREAT ADVANTAGE TO LAY HOLD ON GREAT SINS, AND TO KEEP THEM OFF AT ARM'S LENGTH; WHEN LESS SINS SLIP IN, AND SEIZE UPON THE HEART UNPERCEIVABLY. For,

1. *Great and Presumptuous Sins seldom make an assault upon the soul, but they give warning beforehand to prepare for resistance.*

The stratagems of war, if they are but discovered, usually prove unsuccessful: as strong liquors, taking vent, lose their strength and spirits. So is it in this holy war also: the soul may easily foresee gross sins, and therefore may more easily avoid them. If a man feel in himself sinful thoughts stirring, and sinful desires struggling, hereupon an assault is made, and the Devil hereby gives us warning what sins we should especially watch against: are they lascivious thoughts? beware of uncleanness: are they wrathful thoughts? beware of murder: are they murmuring thoughts? beware of blasphemy: are they worldly thoughts and desires? beware of oppression and injustice. Thus these giant-like sins stand forth in view, and send open defiance to the soul, and bid it prepare for the combat. Sinful thoughts and sinful desires go before, as armour-bearers use to go before their champions, and proclaim what great lust is about to make an assault upon the soul.

Now such fore-warnings as these are a great advantage, that we have, to repel and subdue them. Job xxxiv. 32, *That, which I see not, teach thou me.* And what follows? *If I have done iniquity, I will do* so *no more.* When a man sees his enemy before him, this is a mighty advantage, either to avoid or to conquer.

This advantage we have not against smaller sins. We cannot so easily escape sins of ignorance, because we cannot see them; nor yet the sins of our thoughts and desires, because we cannot foresee them. Who of us all knows what thoughts will next bub-

ble up in our hearts, whether holy and gracious, or whether sinful and profane? These strike without warning; and, as an enemy within, rise up in the midst of our hearts unseen.

Sins are of two sorts: either those, by which we are tempted; or those, to which we are tempted. The Devil makes use of one sin, to tempt to another; of a less, to tempt to a greater. Thus, wicked thoughts are, at once, sins in themselves, and also temptations unto wicked actions. Now it is very hard, and the best Christians find it so, to keep themselves free from sinful thoughts; because these spring up immediately in the heart, without any foregoing temptations to them: but, while the Devil is tempting us to sinful actions by sinful thoughts, then the soul hath leisure to recollect itself, to muster up all its graces, to set its guards, to call in divine help and assistance; and, upon these preparations, it may more easily resist the sin and overcome the temptation.

And that is one great advantage which we have, to keep ourselves from Presumptuous Sins.

2. *Natural conscience also abhors more, and doth more oppose, these outrageous, Presumptuous Sins, than it doth those sins, that it judgeth to proceed only from weakness and infirmity; and this also gives us a mighty advantage to keep ourselves from them.*

Little sins do not much disturb the peace and quietness of a man's conscience; and, therefore, the Apostle speaks of himself before his conversion, in Acts xxiii. 1, *I have lived,* says he, *in all good conscience before God until this* very *day.* And so, in Phil. iii. 6, *touching the.....Law,* says he, speaking of himself before his conversion, I was *blameless.* How could that be? What! blameless; and unconverted, and in a state of nature! Yes, he was not guilty of notorious, scandalous sins; and, as for lesser faults, his conscience overlooked them, and never blamed him for them. And so, truly, is it with many a moral man: his conscience hath not a word to say against all his small and petty sins: let his heart be sensual, and his thoughts vain, and his discourse unsavoury, and his life unprofitable; yet, still, conscience and he live very friendly together: But, let the Devil tempt such a sober sinner as this is, to murder, or adultery, or drunkenness, or some such branded impiety, conscience then flings fire-brands and storms, and cries out, with Hazael, What! *is thy servant a dog, that he should do such* things as these are? As subjects pay to their prince, in many little sums, without grudging, that, which, were it exacted from them, all at once, in one great tax, would make them repine if not rebel; so is it with us: we stand not with the Devil for small sins; but, if he

tempt us to greater abominations, then conscience makes an alarm and uproar in the soul, and will not, nay cannot consent to damn itself by wholesale. Certainly, that man, that can, as our Saviour speaks of the Pharisees, swallow camels, sins of a huge bulk and size, without any check or straining at them, must needs have a conscience as wide-mouthed as hell; and he, who hath so large a conscience, hath no conscience at all.

And that is another advantage which we have against Presumptuous Sins.

3. *The fear of shame and of infamy in the world, many times, puts a great restraint upon the lusts of men; and keeps them from breaking out into those daring and presumptuous wickednesses, that otherwise they would do.*

Therefore, our Saviour describes the Unjust Judge to be one of a strange temper, that neither feared God, nor regarded man: Luke xviii. 2. Those, that have worn off all fear of God from their hearts, yet usually have some awe of man still left them: though they are so hardened, that they fear not God's judging them; yet they are withal so childish, that they fear man's censuring them: loth they are, that their names should be tossed to and fro, from tongue to tongue; that the world should say of them, "This man is a drunkard," and "That man is an unclean person," and "That man is a thief." Tell me, O sinner, why else dost thou seek corners to hide thy wickedness in? why dost thou not do it in the face of the sun, and before the eyes of the whole world? Why that very shame, that makes men skulk in secret when they sin, had they no secrecy to hide themselves in from the notice of men, would keep them also from the sin itself. It doth not terrify men to consider, that God writes down all their sins in his book of remembrance; but, should he write all their sins upon their foreheads in visible letters, that all the world might read them, where is the wretch so impudent, that would dare to be seen abroad? Our streets would be desolate, and your pews would be empty, and the world would grow a wilderness; and those, that we took for men, would appear to be but very monsters and beasts: such woeful transformation hath sin made in the world. How many swine are there, wallowing in their own vomit! how many goatish sensualists are become brutish in filthy pleasures! how many earth-worms are there, crawling up and down in the muck of this world, loading themselves with thick clay! Certainly, if every sinner should be seen in his own shape, we should meet with very few men in the world. Now wicked men are ashamed to be seen abroad in such

disguises as these are, and therefore they study to sin in secret; or, if that cannot be, they force themselves to abstain from sin; unwilling they are to be pointed at in the streets. "There goes a drunkard, or an extortioner: there, a cheater, or an adulterer;" and the like: and, for very fear thereof, sometimes they are kept from the commission of those infamous sins, that would make them a reproach to all their neighbours. And that is another advantage.

4. *The fear of human laws and penalties doth many times keep men from the committing many great and horrid impieties, such as would fall under the notice of the law.*

It is a great mercy, that God hath instituted magistracy, that may be a terror to evil works; as the Apostle speaks, Rom. xiii. 3. Were it not more for fear of human laws inflicting of corporal punishments upon men, than God's threatening of eternal punishments, the whole world would become worse than a savage wilderness: within, would be fears and tumults; without, would be rage and violence: our dwellings, our persons, our possessions, would be all exposed to the furious lusts of ungodly men; and, *by swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery,* men would *break* forth, till *blood toucheth blood;* as the Prophet speaks: Hos. iv. 2. But the wise Providence of God, who hath subdued the beasts of the earth to man, hath also subdued man, who else would become more wild and brutish than they, to man: God hath therefore subdued man to man, so that those, that stand not in any awe of the God of Heaven, yet are awed by the gods of the earth; and those, whom the thoughts of hell and eternal wrath cannot scare from sin, yet many times the thoughts of a prison and gibbet do.

Now this fear is of great advantage, to keep men from the commission of Presumptuous Sins; which they have not, to keep them from the commission of lesser and smaller sins.

And, what! is not this security enough against them? Is there need of any more? Were it not strange, if the warning given beforehand to prepare for resistance, if the reluctancy of natural conscience, if the shame of the world and the fears of human laws and penalties, should not be sufficient to preserve us from them? Were not this strange? Yes, it were so: yet so it is.

ii. NOTWITHSTANDING ALL THESE ADVANTAGES, STILL WE HAVE GREAT CAUSE TO PRAY, WITH DAVID, *Lord, keep back thy servants from Presumptuous Sins.* All other defence is but weak, and all other security is but unsafe: Lord, therefore do thou keep us.

And this I shall endeavour to demonstrate unto you, by two particulars: the one, from Scripture; and, the other, from Experience.

1. From *Scripture.*

All our ability, whether for the performance of duties or for the opposing of corruption, is, in Scripture, entirely ascribed unto the power of God.

Thus, the Apostle exhorts the Ephesians, in chap. vi. 10. *My brethren, be strong.* But, in whom? what, in yourselves? no, says he, but, *be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might:* for, in his almighty power, though mighty corruptions rush in upon you and threaten your ruin, though the Devil and the powers of hell push sore at you to make you fall; yet God calls upon you to stand, and to withstand them all. "Stand, alas! how can we? such poor weak feeble creatures as we are, how can we stand?" why, says the Apostle, *be strong in the Lord:* there is your security against all the force of your spiritual enemies: lay hold on his almighty power, and engage that for you, and this will bring you off the field with victory and conquest.

So, again, in 2 Cor. iii. 5. We are not sufficient, says the Apostle, *of ourselves, to* do *anything as of ourselves:* not sufficient to think a good thought, and therefore not sufficient to resist an evil thought. For our resisting of an evil thought must be by thinking a good one: if an evil thought rise up in our hearts, we cannot, of ourselves, so much as think, that that thought is evil, nor think that it ought to be suppressed and stifled; and, much less, can we then, of ourselves, suppress any sin. And what should we do under this utter impotency and inability, but call in divine help and assistance? *our sufficiency is of God.*

Yet, in this, we cannot think our sufficiency to be of God, nor can we depend upon the sufficiency of God to enable us to do it: *For it is God,* says the Apostle, *that worketh in* us *both to will and to do of his own good pleasure,* both to think and to act; so you have it in Phil. ii. 13.

So that it is most evident, to all, that will not wilfully shut their eyes against the light of truth, that both the first motions and the whole succeeding progress of the soul, either to the performance of duty or to the resistance of sin, are wholly from God's almighty power engaged for them, and strengthening them to the one and for the other.

2. Another demonstration of this truth shall be from *the Common Experience of all.*

Have you not found, sometimes, that you could, with holy scorn and disdain, reject those very temptations to sin, that, at other times, when God hath absented himself from you, when he hath

withdrawn his power and grace, have sadly prevailed upon you, it may be to the commission of some daring and presumptuous sin? Have you not found it to be so? What else is this, but an evident argument, that it is not your own, but God's power, that keeps you from the worst sins? We may conclude by our falls, when God doth forsake us, that, when we stand, we stand not by our own strength, but by his. Why do you not always fall? or why do you not always stand? will you say it is, because we are not always alike tempted? if you be not, why, then, since the Devil is always alike malicious? even herein, appear the mercy and power of God, who almightily rebukes him: but when you are alike tempted, whence proceeds it, that sometimes you yield, and sometimes you resist and conquer; but only from hence, sometimes God is present to assist you, and sometimes he departs from you to humble you? he is present sometimes, that you might not utterly sink and perish under your sins; and he absents himself sometimes, that you may be sensible by your falls, that formerly it was not your own, but his power that preserved you.

And this may suffice for the demonstration of the truth; That it is not in the power of the best Christians to keep themselves from Presumptuous Sins, but God's power only can do this.

iii. Now, by this time, possibly it may arise up in the hearts of some profane ones, to make the same OBJECTION, as some did, in the Apostle's days, against the doctrine of election: "If it be so, that it is not in my own power to keep myself from the commission of sin, yea of the greatest and worst sins, but only God's power can do this: why doth he yet complain? why doth he yet find fault with us for doing that, which we cannot but do, unless he himself preserve us from it?"

I might here take occasion to vindicate the equity and righteousness of *God*, in requiring from us the exercise of that power, that he bestowed upon our natures at first, and which we lost only through our own wilful default: but I have done this divers times already; and, therefore, I shall only at present briefly consider what power men have still left them, both in a state of nature and in a state of grace, to keep themselves from the commission of sin: and that, in a few particulars, briefly.

1. *Clear it is, that, whatever power men have, either to naturals or to spirituals; yet they cannot act or exercise that power, without exciting influence from God to quicken and rouse it.*

Who will say, that a man, that sits, hath not power to rise; and that a man, that stands, hath not power to walk? and yet it is cer-

tain, he neither shall rise nor walk, unless God move and excite and rouse that power of his, and put it upon that work: *for, in him,* as *we live,* so we *move and have our being.* So, then, the power to use our power is from God's quickening, enlivening, and actuating of us.

2. *A child of God, who is regenerated and born again, hath a power to do something that is not sin:* because he hath a gracious principle wrought within him; and he acts for a right end, even the glory of God in the salvation of his soul.

But yet, this, withal, must be supposed, that he shall never so act, without the special aid and assistance of God, quickening and stirring up his graces.

3. *A man, in a state of nature, hath no power to keep himself from sin in general.*

That is, he hath no power to do any thing, but what is sinful; for, whatever action is not sinful must flow from a gracious principle, and must be directed to a right end; which no action of a wicked man can be, for both the first principle and also the last end of every action, that a wicked man doth, are carnal self.

4. *Though wicked men have not a power to do that, which is not sinful; yet they have a power to resist this or that particular sin.*

They are sadly necessitated to act within the sphere of sin; that is, whatever they act is sinful; but, yet, they may, as it were, choose which sin they will act. Neither doth this overthrow what was delivered before: for, when they choose a less sin rather than a greater, when they avoid the commission of a daring and presumptuous sin and choose rather to perform a duty; this proceeds not merely from their own power, but from the power and influence of God, raising and exciting their power. That men choose to feed upon wholesome meat rather than upon poison, though they have a free-will to do so; yet this doth not merely proceed from their free-will, but from God's guiding and exciting that free-will, to choose wholesome food rather than poison. So it is here: what sin man avoids, is not to be ascribed to his own power, though a power he hath: but it is to be ascribed only to God's common or to his special grace and influence, whereby that power, that would otherwise lie dead and unacted, is quickened and actuated in us. What difference is there, betwixt a man that hath no power, and a man that hath a power but yet cannot use it? Truly, such are we: what power we have against sin, we cannot make use of, till God raise and act us by his exciting grace: therefore have we still need to pray, with David, Lord, do thou keep me from sin: for, though

I have a power, yet it is but a latent and sleepy power; and will not be available, till thou dost awaken and quicken it.

V. The next thing to be enquired into, is HOW GOD KEEPS MEN BACK FROM PRESUMPTUOUS SINS, even then, when their proneness to them is most violent and eager.

For satisfaction to this, you must know, that God hath two hands, whereby he holds men back from their sins.

The strong hand of his Providence. The powerful hand of Grace.

And, sometimes, God puts both these hands to it, in a mixed way of Providence and Grace together. These are, as it were, God's left-hand and his right-hand: by the one he overrules the actions; and, by the other, he overrules the hearts of men: and both, almightily.

i. God frequently withholds men from the commission of sin, BY A STRONG HAND OF PROVIDENCE UPON THEM.

Frequently, he doth so: and, that he doth not so always, is not because he is defective, either in power or goodness, whereby he should restrain them from evil; but because he is infinite in wisdom, whereby he knows how to bring good out of evil.

And, therefore, before I proceed to lay down those several ways that Providence takes to hinder the commission of sin, I shall premise this: That it is no taint at all to the pure holiness of God, that he doth, by his Providence, concur to those wickednesses of men, that, if he pleased, he might prevent and hinder.

That God doth so is clear: for Providence is not so often a restraint from sin, as it is a powerful temptation unto sin. It is a temptation, as it administers objects and opportunities, and as it suits them both unto the lusts of men. Thus, Cain killed his brother Abel, by a providence; and Achan stole the wedge of gold: Judas betrayed his master, and the Jews crucified him, by a providence: yea, all that villainy, that ever was acted under the sun, was all brought forth out of the cursed wombs of men's lusts, and made fruitful by God's Providences.

Neither is it hard to conceive, how God should, without sin himself, concur to sin in others: since his most sovereign will, being above all law, cannot possibly fall under any guilt. We are obliged to keep back men from the commission of sin, when it is in our power to do it; but no such obligation lies upon God, though he can easily keep all wicked men in the world from ever sinning more: yea, though they are so tied up, that they are not able to sin without his permission and concurrence; yet he permits wisely, concurs holily, and yet notwithstanding at last punishes justly. In

brief, God doth whatever man doth: for, as the Prophet saith, *he worketh all our works in us* and for us; and, *in him, we live, and move, and have our being.* And yet, in one and the same action, man sins and God is holy: because man acts contrary to that law, which God hath set him; but God himself is subject to no law, besides his own sovereign will, and *where* there *is no law, there is no transgression,* as the Apostle speaks, in Romans iv. 15. God is not bound to hinder the commission of sin as we are; and, therefore, when he permits, nay when Providence accomplished it, still is he holy, just, and good; still is he *righteous in all his ways and holy in all his works,* though he works that together with men, that makes them unrighteous and unholy.

This I thought fit to premise, that so, when you hear how many ways God is able to hinder the commission of sin by his Providence, you should not suffer any undue thoughts to rise up in your hearts against his holiness, when he chooseth sometimes rather to permit and concur to the sins of men, than to hinder and forbid them: who, when he permits sin, permits it righteously; and, when he hinders sin, hinders it almightily.

1. There are *Five* remarkable ways, whereby the all-wise Providence of God hinders the commission of a sin, even then when men are most bent and eager upon it.*

(1) Sometimes, where his Grace doth not sanctify the heart, his Providence shortens the life, of the sinner.

Where he doth not cleanse the fountain, yet there he removes the foundation of a sin; that is, he takes away the very life and being of the sinner. Many times, when wicked men have imagined some presumptuous sin, and go big with it, God suddenly cuts them off from the land of the living; and gives them no space to bring it forth, unless it be in hell among those Devils that inspired it: Ps. lxiv. 6, 7, says the Psalmist, *They search out iniquities: they accomplish a diligent search:* but what follows? *God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded:* while they are thinking and contriving wickedness in their hearts, in that very day they perish and their thoughts with them. Thus, proud Pharaoh resolves, in spite of God and all his miracles, to bring back the children of Israel to their old bondage; but, before he could bring his purpose into execution, God brings him to execution. And, so, Sennacherib intends the destruction of Jerusalem; but, before he can compass it, God slays his army and his own children also. Herod intends a bloody persecution against the Church: but

* The former editions have *four*, but the author enumerates *five*. Editor.

God smites him: lice devour him; and eat a way into that very heart, that conceived so wicked a purpose. It were endless to cite instances, in this particular. Histories and hell are full of those, whom God's Providence hath cut off, before they could fulfil their ungodly designs; upon whom that threatening in Eccl. viii. 13, hath been signally verified, *It shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days.....because he feareth not before God.* This Providence God doth usually, if not only, exercise upon wicked men; snatching them away from their sins, and yet in their sins also. Yea, and herein he deals with them also, in some kind of mercy, in that he abridges the time of his patience to them, who, he foresees, will only abuse it, and treasure up to themselves *wrath against the day of wrath;* for, hereby, their account is lessened, and their torments made more tolerable. It had been better for sinners, that they had dropped immediately from the womb to the tomb; better, that they had been swaddled in their winding-sheets: yea, shall I say it had been better for them, that they had been doomed to everlasting torments, as soon as they saw the light, than that God should suffer them to live twenty, forty, or sixty years, adding iniquity to iniquity without repentance; and God accordingly adding torments to torments to punish them, never to be repented of? Oh, the desperate condition, that sinners are in! Unless God give them repentance, the sooner they are in hell, the better it will be for them; and it is a mercy, if God will damn them betimes! Those, whom God doth not endear to his Grace by changing their natures, yet he indebts to his Providence by shortening their lives: and, yet, are there none of us, that wish our lives were prolonged to a thousand years, were it possible; not that we might have a longer time and space to repent, but that we might the longer enjoy our sins? If God should grant your wish, and keep you alive till the Day of Judgment, would not that day become a thousand fold more gloomy and dreadful to you, than if God had cut you off at the ordinary time and age? and, therefore, it is a great favour, that God vouchsafes both to the elect and to reprobates, in that, since the flood, he hath cut short the days of man upon earth: for, hereby, the elect come to enjoy the glory and happiness of heaven the sooner; and reprobates feel the torments and punishments of hell the lighter, Providence, by a speedy dispatch, preventing those sins, that otherwise would sink them the deeper into condemnation.

(2) God providentially keeps men from sinning, if not by shortening their lives, yet by cutting short their power, whereby they should be enabled to commit sin.

All that power, that wicked men have to sin, is either from themselves, or from their wicked associates whom they make use of as instruments for the accomplishment of their impieties: but Providence can strike them in both; and, thereby, give their lusts a miscarrying womb and dry breasts. Sometimes, God, by his Providence, cuts off their evil Instruments; and thereby disables them from sinning: sometimes, their instruments for counsel; thus Providence, by overruling Absalom to reject the counsel of Ahithophel, prevents all that mischief that so wise and so wicked a statesman might have contrived; and thereupon he goes and hangs himself: sometimes he cuts off their instruments of execution; and, so, God disappointed the hopes of blaspheming Rabshakeh, and sent an angel, that, in one night, killed almost two hundred thousand of the Assyrians dead on the place: certainly, it is great folly, for men, upon confidence of their wise and powerful instruments, to set themselves up against that God, that can, without or against all means and instruments, confound their designs and frustrate all their enterprises. And, as God thus strikes their instruments: so, sometimes, he strikes their Persons; and takes from them the use of those natural faculties, by which they should be enabled to commit their sins: sometimes, he hides their wits from them, and besots them; so he did to the Jews: John vii. 30. They sought to apprehend Jesus: who did hinder them? was he not there among them? Were there not enough of them to do it? yet they only stand gazing at him, like men besotted, till he escapes away from them: sometimes, God hides away their hands from them, and enfeebles them; as in Ps. lxxvi. 5, *None of the* mighty *men have found their hands:* God hath benumbed them, and laid their hands out of the way when they should have used them: the Sodomites, you know, swarmed thick about Lot's house, intending villainy to his guests; and God smote them with blindness, that they groped for the door, even at noon-day: Jeroboam stretcheth out his hand against the Prophet, and God suddenly withers it. This is God's frequent course with wicked men: when he doth not subdue their wills, yet he oftentimes subdues their power of sinning. Yea, and possibly, although we have not such frequent instances of it, God may deal thus sometimes with his own children: thus he hath threatened or promised rather to his Church, that he will *hedge up* her *way with thorns*, that she should not be able to break through to her idols, as formerly she had done: so you have it in Hos. ii. 6. And, indeed, it is a great mercy, that God doth take away that power from men that he sees they will only abuse to their own de-

struction. It is not cruelty, but compassion, that chains up madmen; and takes from them those swords, arrows and firebrands, that else they would hurl up and down abroad, both to their own and others' mischief: and, so, it is God's common pity to sinners, that are very madmen, that fetters and chains them up; and lays such a powerful restraint upon them by his Providence, that, where their wills are not defective, yet their power to execute sin should be. What would wicked men think, if God should now suddenly strike them dumb, or blind, or lame, or impotent? would they not account this a heavy judgment inflicted upon them? they would so: and yet, believe it, it were better for them that God should strike them dumb upon the place, than that they sheuld ever open their mouths more to blaspheme and rail at God and his people: better, they were struck blind, than that the Devil and vile lusts should enter into the soul by those casements: better, that God should maim them, than that they should have strength to commit those sins, that, if but willed, will damn them; but, if executed, will sink their souls sevenfold deeper into condemnation. Now the Providence of God, by taking away their power, prevents their wickedness, and so mercifully mitigates their condemnation.

(3) Sometimes, God keeps men from the commission of sin, by raising up another power against that, by which the sinner is to execute sin.

Thus, when Saul would have put Jonathan to death for breaking a rash vow that he himself had made, God raiseth up the spirits of the people to rescue him; and they plainly tell him, Jonathan shall not die. The Jews hated Christ, and would have killed him, but that they feared the people, whom his miracles had obliged to him, so that they durst not venture upon him till his hour was come.

(4) Sometimes, Providence casts in some seasonable diversion, that turns them off from the commission of that sin, that they intended.

When they are hotly pursuing their wickedness, Providence starts some other game for them, and sets them upon some other work. Thus it fared with Antiochus, in Dan. xi. 30: he sets himself against the Holy Covenant; but, for all his rage against it, he shall return into his own land, says God: *for the ships of Chittim shall come against him*, and the ships of the Romans; and, instead of invading others' dominions, he must return to defend his own: thus God diverted him from his design of ruining the Jews. And, sometimes, where God doth not dry up the spring of corruption, yet he turns the streams of it which way he pleaseth: as a skilful physician,

when one part of the body is oppressed with ill humours, draws them to another part that is less dangerous; so God, by his Providence, turns men from the commission of a greater to a lesser sin; thus he overruled Joseph's brethren: they consulted to cast him into a pit, and there to let him starve, unless he could feed upon his dream of wheat sheaves; but God, by his Providence, so orders it, that merchants pass by that way, and to them they sell him. There are, I believe, but few men, who, if they will but examine back their lives, cannot produce many instances both of the Devil's Policy, in fitting them with occasions and opportunities of sin, and of God's Providence, in causing some emergent affairs, some unexpected action to interpose, and hinder them from those sins that they purposed.

(5) God, sometimes, keeps men from sin, by removing the object, against which they intended to commit it.

Thus, when Herod intended to put Peter to death the next morning, that very night God sends an angel, and makes his escape, and so prevents that sin: and so, truly, in all ages, God hides away his children from the fury of ungodly men.

There are, doubtless, many other various and mysterious Providences, whereby God hinders the sins of men; but these are the most common and most remarkable ways: by shortening their lives; by lessening their power; by raising up another power to oppose them; by diverting them another way; and by removing the objects of their sins.

The next thing is, to show you how God hinders the commission of sin, in a way of Grace.

2. But I shall leave this till another time, and make some *Application* of what hath now been spoken.

(1) See here the sad and woeful estate of wicked men, whom Grace doth not change, but only Providence restrain.

A mere restraint from sin, when the heart continues fully set and bent upon it, must needs cause torment and vexation. Their own corruptions urge them forward; but God's Providence, that meets them and crosses them at every turn, and that disappointment, that they meet when they fully resolve upon sin, cause great vexation of spirit. As God will torment them hereafter for their sins; so he torments them here, by keeping them from their sins. All the wicked in the world are strangely hampered by God's Providence, as so many bulls in a net: that, though they struggle, yet cannot possibly break through; and, by their struggling only vex and weary themselves. God doth, as it were, give up the hearts of

wicked men to the Devil: only he ties their hands. Let them intend and imagine as much evil and mischief as they can; yea, as much as hell can inspire into them: yet none of these shall execute any of it, otherwise than as God permits them. Now if there be any real pleasure in sin, it is in the execution of it: that, which men take in the plotting and contriving of it, is merely the delight of a dream and fancy; and herein lies the exceeding wretchedness of wicked men, that, though Providence almightily hinders them in the execution of sin, yet justice will justly punish their intention and plotting of it.

(2) This should teach us to adore and magnify this sin-preventing Providence of God.

Our lives, our estates, yea, whatever is dear and precious to us hitherto, have been secured to us only by his powerful hand, which hath curbed in the unruly lusts of men, and kept them from breaking forth into violence, and blood, and rapine. Should God slack the reins, should he throw them upon the necks of ungodly men, how would uproars, and confusions, murders, and slaughters overspread the face of the whole earth, and make the world a hell above ground! Redemption and Providence are two wonderful works of God: by the one he pardons sin, that is committed; and, by the other, he prevents sin, lest it be committed: both of them are contrivances of Infinite Wisdom; and both of them are unsearchable, and past finding out; and, therefore, we ought to ascribe the glory of both unto God, that hath laid both the design of Redemption and of Providence for man's good, and for man's salvation.

(3) If, at any time, we can recall to mind, as indeed who is there that cannot, that God hath thus by his Providence prevented us from the commission of sin, how should this oblige us thankfully to own this mercy of God to us!

May not all of us say, "Had not God taken away our power, had he not taken away the objects of our lusts, had he not diverted us some other way, we had now been deeply engaged in those sins, that the merciful Providence of God hath diverted us from?" He it was, that hedged up the broad way with thorns; that so he might turn us into the narrow way, that leads unto eternal life and happiness.

(4) Hath God's Providence so many ways and methods to hinder the commission of sin? then we may be assured, that he will never permit it, but when it shall redound to his own praise and glory.

It is an excellent saying of Austin: "He, that is most good, will never suffer evil, unless he were also most wise; whereby he is able to bring good out of evil." And, therefore, when we see

wicked men let alone to accomplish their hellish designs, we may then quiet ourselves with this: "God knows how to make his own advantage out of their wickedness: to know how, from such dung and filth to reap a most fruitful crop of glory to himself." The rage of man, says the Psalmist, thou wilt restrain, and the residue thereof shall turn to thy praise: that wickedness, which God doth not restrain, he will make redound to his own praise and glory.

(5) This may establish our hearts in peace, when we see the wickedness of men most raging and violent: "They cannot sin, unless God gives them a power." As Christ told Pilate, *Thou* hast *no power* over *me*, in John. xix. 11; *except it* be *given thee from above.*

And, certainly, that God, that gives them a power to sin, still keeps a power in his own hands to limit them in their sins; and when their lusts are most unruly, he can say to them, *Hitherto* shall ye go, and *here shall* your *proud waves be stayed.* He stints them, and bounds them; and he also can totally restrain them, when he pleaseth, and when it shall be most for his own praise and glory.

ii. Now, as God doth thus keep men back from the commission of Presumptuous Sins by a strong hand of Providence: so, sometimes, he doth it by his GRACE.

And this Grace is either merely restraining, or else it is sanctifying and renewing. Both of them are of very great force and efficacy: by the one, he holds men back from sin; and, by the other, he turns them against sin.

1. You have, doubtless, read much concerning Sanctifying and Restraining Grace: but, yet, that your notions and apprehensions of them may be more clear and distinct, I shall give you *the difference there is betwixt these two* in several particulars.

They differ, in their Subject: they differ, in their Essence: and they differ, in their Manner of Operation.

(1) They differ, in respect of their Subject.

Restraining Grace is but common; and it works upon wicked men and reprobates, as well as upon others: but Sanctifying Grace is special; and belongs only to those, who belong themselves to the election of grace. Esau, whom the Scripture notes as the great instance of reprobation, comes out against Jacob, with a troop of four thousand ruffians; intending, doubtless, to revenge himself upon him for the loss of his birth-right and blessing: but, at their first meeting, God, by a secret work, so mollifies his heart, that, instead of falling upon him and killing him, he falls upon his neck and kisses him: here God restrains him from that Presumptuous Sin of murder, not in a way of mere external providence, but with

his own hand immediately turns about his heart; and, by seeing such a company of cattle bleating and bellowing, so many timorous men and helpless children all bowing and supplicating unto him, he turns his revenge into compassion, and, with much urging, receives a present from him, whom before he intended to make a prey. The same power of restraint God laid upon the heart of Abimelech, that heathen king: you have it in Genesis xx. 6, when he had taken Sarah, Abraham's wife, intending to make her his wife or concubine, God tells him in a dream, *I withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her:* here was nothing visible to hinder Abimelech from so great a wickedness: but God invisibly wrought upon his heart, and unhinged his wicked desires. Now, from the instances of Esau and Abimelech, we may clearly collect how Restraining Grace differs both from Restraining Providence, and also from Sanctifying Grace. From Providence it differs, because, usually, when God providentially restrains from sin, he doth it by some visible apparent means, that doth not work by bringing any change or alteration on the heart, but only by laying an external check upon men's actions: but, by Restraining Grace, God deals in a secret way with the very heart of a sinner; and, though he doth not change the nature of his heart, yet he alters the present frame and disposition of it, and takes away the desire of committing those sins that yet it doth not mortify. And, from Sanctifying Grace it differs also, in that God vouchsafes Restraining Grace to wicked men, as you have heard; but none partake of Sanctifying Grace besides the children of God, and the remnant according to election: those whom he predestinates, them he also calls, that is, them he sanctifies; as you have it in Rom. viii. 30. Election and sanctification are of the self-same breadth: election is the cause of sanctification, and sanctification is a sign of election. Those whom God will bring to himself in glory, he causeth a double separation to pass upon: the one, from eternity, when he calls them out from the mass of those that he leaves to perish in their sins; and the other in time, when those, whom he hath set apart for himself by election, he brings home to himself by conversion. And, therefore, whatever measure of Restraining Grace God may afford to wicked men and reprobates; yet Sanctifying Grace is the fruit only of election, and the portion only of those who are elected. And that is the first difference.

(2) They differ also, in their Nature and Essence.

Sanctifying Grace is a habit wrought in the soul by the Spirit of God; called, therefore, a writing of the Law on the heart, and a

putting of God's fear into our inward parts: Jer. xxxi. 33. And St. John terms it, a seed, that remains: 1 John iii. 9. These expressions clearly denote it to be an internal principle or habit, deeply rooted and fixed in the soul: and, whatever holy actions a saint performs, as they are caused by a divine influence without him, so they flow also from a holy principle within him: hence our Saviour tells us, in Matt. xii. 35, that *a good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things;* that is, out of that inward habit and principle of grace, that the Holy Ghost hath wrought in him, in the work of regeneration. But Restraining Grace hath no such habit and principle implanted in the soul; but is only a merciful actual influence from God, hindering the commission of those sins to which men's natural corruptions make them inclined. In brief, Sanctifying Grace is a quality wrought in us; but Restraining Grace is only an action flowing from God.

(3) Sanctifying and Restraining Grace differ, in their manner of Working and Operation.

And here we may observe a Fourfold difference.

[1] Sanctifying Grace keeps the soul from sin, by destroying it; but Restraining Grace keeps the soul from sin, only by imprisoning it.

God, many times, shuts up the sins of those in prison, whom notwithstanding he will at last shut up in hell. It is Sanctifying Grace alone, that can do execution upon them: Restraining Grace may debar them of their liberty; but it is only Sanctifying Grace, that can deprive them of their life. There may appear but little difference betwixt the conversation of a child of God, whom Special Grace doth sanctify, and one in a state of nature, whom Common Grace doth only restrain: doth the one walk blamelessly, without offence? doth he avoid the grosser pollutions of the world? so doth the other: a star is not more like a star, than these meteors may be like them. But here lies the difference: Restraining Grace only ties the hands; but Sanctifying Grace stabs the Old Man to the heart. It is one thing, to bind a thief to a tree; and another thing, to nail him fast to the cross: Restraining Grace only binds corruption fast, that it cannot stir, not outwardly, but still it hath as much strength as ever; but Sanctifying Grace crucifies it, and nails it to the cross of Christ, where it weakens and languishes and hangs a dying body of death. The earth is as dry and hard in a frosty winter, as it is in a parching summer; yet there is a great deal of difference in the cause of it: in summer, the sun dries up the moisture; and, in winter, the frost binds it in: truly, Restraining and

Sanctifying Grace are, for all the world, like frost and sun: the ways of those, who have only a restraint laid upon them, may be altogether as fair and clean, as the ways of those, that are sanctified; but there is a great difference in the cause: Sanctifying Grace dries up the filth and corruption in the heart of the one; but Restraining Grace only freezes in and binds up the filth and corruption of the other.

[2] Sanctifying Grace strikes especially at the sins of the heart; but Restraining Grace, usually, only hinders the sins of the life.

An unregenerate man, though never so moral, hunts his sins only in purlieus: as soon as they are gotten within the pale, he ceaseth his pursuit. It is, usually, the highest care and upshot of a moral man's endeavours, to keep his lusts from boiling over, and raising smoke and ashes about him: and, if he can but obtain this, let the heart be brimfull of sin, let the thoughts soak and stew in malicious, unclean, covetous designs and contrivances; he never opposeth nor lamenteth them. A mere restraint walks only round about the outward man; and, if it meets with any lust struggling abroad, it drives it in again into the heart; but, for those sins that lie pent up there, it seldom molests, and never subdues them. The heart may indulge itself in vain, filthy, destructive, and pernicious thoughts: it may sit brooding over *cockatrice-eggs*, till it hatch them into serpents; and, in them, be stung to death: it may toss a sin to and fro in the fancy; and, thereby, make some kind of recompense to the Devil for not committing it: and yet this man be only under a powerful restraint from God's Restraining Grace. But Sanctifying Grace doth more especially oppose the sins of the heart and of the inward man; for there, is its seat and residence, in the heart. Restraining Grace watches without; but True Grace dwells within: and, as Christ speaks of the church of Pergamos, it dwells there, *where Satan's seat is:* it rules in the midst of its enemies; and it is engaged so to do for its own security, that it may still crush them as they arise in the heart.

Now, from this particular, we may be helped in judging, whether our abstaining from sin be only from common Restraining Grace, or from Sanctifying and Renewing Grace. See what sins they are, that you most of all labour to beat down. Do you strive only against the sins of your lives, and not against the sins of your hearts that are the spring and fountain of the other? Are you content, when you have beaten your corruptions from the out-works, and driven them in, where they do not rage so furiously as they have done? Whereas, before, they sallied forth at pleasure, and

made havoc of your souls, and wounded your consciences; now, they are pent up in a narrower room and compass; doth this content you? Do you think it enough to lay close siege to your corruptions by conviction and legal terrors; and to shut them up, that they may no more break forth as formerly they have done, to the gross defilement of your lives? If this be all, then know, this is no more than what a mere Common Restraint may effect upon you, without any work of Sanctifying Grace upon the heart. True grace, when it beats back sin, follows it and pursues it into the heart; and there searches for it: and, if it sees it but breathe in a thought, or stir in a desire, presently it falls upon it and destroys it.

[3] Sanctifying Grace, when it keeps a soul from sin, always engages the will against it; but Common and Restraining Grace only awakens and rouses up the conscience against it.

The Will and the Conscience are two leading faculties of the soul: the one commands, what shall be done; and the other informs, what ought to be done: and all the rest of the faculties and affections of the soul take part and side with these two. In a godly man, these two are at an agreement: what conscience prompts, the will commands, and the inferior faculties are all ready to execute. Sanctifying Grace works immediately and specially upon the will, and makes a mighty change there; so that, whereas, before conversion, man's will is so utterly depraved, that it can like nothing but sin; after grace hath touched it and mightily turned it about, it cannot now any longer give its full and free consent to the commission of any sin: if such an one sins, he doth it truly and properly against his will; as the Apostle speaks in Romans vii. 15; *That, which I do, I allow not.* Now a wicked man may sin against his conscience; but it is impossible, that he should ever sin against his will; that is continually set upon sin: and, were it not that God sometimes raiseth up natural conscience in him to oppose his corrupt will, he would every moment rush into the most damning impieties, without any of the least regret or sense of it. When the Devil presents a sin to the embraces of the will, and when the will closes with it, and all the faculties of the soul are ready to commit it, God sends his conscience among them. "What, Conscience, art thou asleep! Seest thou not how the Devil and thine own devilish heart are now plotting and contriving thine eternal ruin?" This rouses conscience, and makes it storm and threaten, and hurl firebrands into the face of sin, while it lies in the very embraces of the will; and, though it cannot change the will from loving it, yet it frights the will from committing it. This is the most usual way,

which Restraining Grace takes for the prevention of sin, by sending in conscience to make strong and vigorous oppositions against it.

There are none of us here, but, through divine grace, have been kept from many sins, that we were in great danger, through the corruptions of our own hearts, to have committed: sin hath been conceived by us; but God hath stifled and strangled it in the womb. Would you know whether this hath proceeded from God's Restraining or from God's Sanctifying Grace? then make a judgment according to this rule: Where Restraining Grace only resists and hinders sin, it doth it by setting one faculty and affection of the soul against another; but, where Sanctifying Grace hinders it, it sets the same faculty and affection of the soul against itself. Restraining Grace sets one affection against another; conscience, against will; the fear of hell, against the love of sin; hellish terrors, against sinful pleasures; God's threatenings, against the Devil's flatteries; it martials up these, and so enters the combat: here are bandyings of one power of the soul against another: but the will is entirely on sin's part; and, if conscience prevail and pull away a beloved lust from the embraces of the will, the sinner parts with it very heavily and unwillingly, following it as Phaltiel did Michal weeping, though he durst not make resistance. But when Sanctifying Grace opposes and hinders sin, it sets the same faculty and affection of the soul against itself; will, against will; love, against love; desire, against desire: he wills the commission of sin, it is true; but yet, at the same time, he wills the mortification of it: he loves to gratify his sin; but yet, at the same time, he wills the crossing of it too: he desires to enjoy that pleasure and contentment, that he fancies he may take in sin; and yet he desires, at the same time, to destroy it. Here is one and the same faculty bandying against itself: and the reason of this is, because a child of God hath two principles in every single faculty: there is in him a mixture of flesh and spirit; a carnal part, that sides with sin, and a spiritual part, that always contradicts and opposes it: and these two are spread over his whole soul, and are mingled with every power and faculty thereof; so that he can neither do the evil nor the good that he would do, without contradiction, strife, and reluctancy. Now try yourselves by this, when you are tempted to sin: what is it, that resists it? is it your will, or is it only your conscience? are you only frighted from it? doth the fear of hell overcome the love of sin? all this may be from a mere Restraint in those, who are altogether unacquainted with the power of Sanctifying Grace. This is the symptom and character of a gracious soul, that, when it is

most inclinable unto sin; yet at the same time, it is most averse from it: when it most wisheth the accomplishment of sin; yet, even then, it strongly wisheth the subduing and mortifying of that sin. I know that this appears a riddle and a strange paradox to wicked men; but those, who have any true sense of the work of grace upon their own hearts, know it to be a truth, and rejoice in the experiences that they have of it.

(4) Restraining and Sanctifying Grace differ, in the Motives and Arguments, that they make use of for the resisting of sin.

There are two general topics or common-places, whence all arguments against sin are drawn; and those are the Law and the Gospel: both of these administer such weapons, as, if rightly used, are very effectual for the beating down of sin. And, commonly, Restraining Grace useth those only, that are borrowed from the Law: it urges the command: it thunders the curse: it brandishes the sword of justice: and makes reports of nothing but hell and eternal damnation; and such like arguments, that scare men from the committing of their sins, though still they love them. Now Sanctifying Grace, though it also makes a most profitable use of these very arguments; yet it chiefly useth more mild and more ingenuous motives, drawn from the love of God, from the death of Christ, from the comforts of the Holy Ghost: and these, though they strike softer, yet they wound deeper.

Now, hereby also, you may give a guess, whether your abstaining from sin, be merely from Restraining or from Sanctifying Grace. Observe what weapons you use. What considerations do over-awe your hearts? are they such, as are drawn only from the Law, and the sad reflections of the end and issue of sin; that it brings shame and death, and hell? must you run down to hell, every time a temptation comes, to fetch arguments thence to oppose against your corruptions? can you no where else *quench the fiery darts of the Devil*, unless it be in that lake of fire? if this be all (though this too is well) yet know, if it be all, this is no more than what Restraint and Common Grace may perform: it is the proper character of Restraining Grace, to keep men back from the commission of sin only by dread and fear of punishment. But Sanctifying Grace especially betakes itself to Gospel Arguments; and considers how disingenuous it is to sin against a reconciled and a Gracious Father, against a crucified and a bleeding Saviour, against a patient and long-suffering Spirit; and heaps up many such like ingenuous arguments, that work kindly upon the heart: the Christian leads every temptation to the cross of Christ, and there shows it his Saviour hanging and

bleeding; "And can I commit this sin, that hath drawn so much blood from my Saviour to expiate it, and would draw so much blood from my conscience to perpetrate it? Did he die to free me from the condemnation of it, and shall I wilfully rush into the commission of it? No, O Lord: thy love withholds me: I cannot do this thing and sin against so rich, so free, and infinite mercy and goodness, that thou daily extendest towards me." This true grace usually teacheth a child of God to argue against his sins; and this keeps him from the commission of those sins, that others, rising up against them only from the terrors and threatenings of the Law and other such dreadful considerations, fall into notwithstanding. A wool-pack sooner damps a bullet, than a stone-wall: and, truly, soft arguments taken from the Gospel, from the love of God, from the death of Christ, from the patience and long-suffering of the Spirit; these soft arguments sooner damp a temptation and resist a corruption, than more rigid and severe ones will when alone used by themselves.

2. Having thus, in general, showed you the Difference betwixt Sanctifying and Restraining Grace, I shall now descend to *more particular considerations of those Ways and Methods, that God useth in keeping men back from sin, by his Special and Sanctifying Grace.*

And, here, I shall premise this: That whatever sin God doth, I mean by his Sanctifying Grace, prevent his own children from the commission of, he doth it by exciting the inward principle of grace, to the actual use and exercise of it.

There is a Twofold Grace, always necessary to keep the best Christians from sin: Habitual and Exciting Grace; and God makes use of the one to quicken and stir up the other: he makes use of exciting grace to quicken habitual grace, that else would lie sluggish and dormant in the soul. Habitual Grace denominates the soul alive unto God; but, yet, it is no otherwise alive than a man in a swoon is: it is Exciting Grace, that alone can enable it to perform the functions and offices of life. In the deepest winter, there is life in the seed, that lies buried under ground; but, yet, it acts not till the sun's influence draws it forth, and then it heaves and shoves away the earth that covered it, and spreads itself into the beauties of a flower: so is it here: Inherent, Habitual Grace is an immortal seed; and it is but a seed, till the influences of the approaching and Exciting Grace of God awaken it, and chafe its benumbed virtue; and then it stirs and thrusts away all that dung and filth of corruptions under which it lay buried, and then it flows forth into Actual Grace. Habitual and Exciting Grace must both

concur, to the producing of Actual Grace; as necessarily, as there must be the concurrence both of the heat of the sun and of life in the seed, to produce a flower.

Now by God's Exciting of inherent, Habitual Grace in the soul, he keeps men from sinning Two ways. By Prevention and by Suppression of Sin.

(1) Hereby he prevents and excludes those sins, that, were we not employed in the exercise of grace, we should commit.

When the soul is constantly employed in holy and spiritual affairs, sin hath then neither room nor opportunity to put forth itself. It is kept out from the thoughts, when they are bruised in holy meditation: it is kept out from the affections, when they are set upon heavenly objects: it is kept out from the life and conversation, when the duties both of the general and particular calling are duly performed in their respective seasons. The Apostle exhorts us, in Eph. iv. 27, not to *give place to the Devil:* truly, when God's Exciting Grace quickens our Inherent Grace into continual exercise, when every faculty is filled with holy actings and every season with holy duties, the Devil can have no place to tempt, nor corruption to stir. It is the best security God can give from the commission of sin, to quicken to the performance of duty. When we pray, or meditate, or attend upon public ordinances, we ought to bless God for his Exciting Grace, whereby we have not only performed a duty, but also escaped some foul and notorious sin, that we might have committed had we not been so holily employed: we, who are here now present before the Lord this day, had we neglected this present opportunity, who of us knows, what horrid temptations and foul sins we might have been exposed to in our own houses, which in the house of God we have avoided? David, when he walks idly upon the roof of his house, lies open to the snares of the Devil, and sins foully: had he then been at his Harp or Psalms, he might thereby have driven the evil spirit from himself, as formerly he did from his master Saul. Running streams preserve themselves pure and clean, when standing pools soon grow corrupt and noisome, and venomous creatures breed in them: so is it with the heart: whilst God's exciting and quickening grace puts it upon continual act, it is preserved from corruption; but, when once it grows sluggish, and doth not freely flow forth into the actings of grace and performance of duties, the spawn of all manner of sin breeds there, and filthy lusts crawl to and fro in it without any disturbance: and, therefore, we should continually pray, that God would vouchsafe us the quickening influence of his Spirit;

that he would fill our sails with that wind, that blows where it listeth: Arise, *O north wind; and come, thou south* wind: and *blow upon* our gardens, *that the spices thereof may flow* forth; for if the spices do not, the stench will.

(2) As God, by his Exciting Grace, hindereth those sins, that might arise in the heart; so he also suppresseth those sins, that do arise.

There is the greatest contrariety imaginable, betwixt Inherent Sin and Inherent Grace: when the one is vigorous, the other languishes; when the one is acted, the other grows dull and sluggish. Now both these opposite principles have their seat and abode in the same heart; and both of them are in continual expectation of exciting influence to call them forth into act. Indwelling Corruption is usually roused up by temptation; when it stirs in the heart, and is ready to break forth in the life; Habitual Grace, though it looks on, yet is of itself so feeble that it can make no opposition, till a kindly influence from the Spirit of God calls out some particular grace, that is directly contrary to that sin that stirs; and this resists and subdues it. This method God used in keeping the Apostle from sinning: 2 Cor. xii. He was there under a sharp and pungent temptation, that is there therefore called *a thorn in the flesh:* v. 7. Satan buffets, and the Apostle prays: and God answers, *My grace is sufficient for thee:* "My grace is sufficient; not thy grace: that grace, that is in thee, is but weak and helpless, yea a very nothing, if I withdraw my influence from it; but that quickening grace, that flows from me, that alone is sufficient to remove the temptation and to prevent the sin." Now, while God's Exciting Grace worked upon the Apostle's Inherent Grace, this temptation, this *thorn in the flesh* only made him more watchful and more industrious against it: but, if God should have suspended this his influence, this *thorn in the flesh* would immediately, notwithstanding all his grace, sadly have wounded his conscience, by the commission of some great and foul sin. Now, as all manner of sin lies couched in that body of sin, that we bear about with us; so all manner of grace lies couched in that principle of grace, that God implants in his own children. Now, when the Devil by his temptations calls forth some particular sin, God also at the same time by his Exciting Grace calls forth a particular grace, to hinder the commission of that sin: thus, when they are tempted to pride, God calls forth humility to prick that swelling, puffing bladder: when they are tempted to wrath and passion, he stirs up meekness; when to murmuring and repining against the dispensations of God, he puts patience upon its perfect

work. Briefly, there is no sin whatever, that the Devil can by his temptation stir up in the heart, but God also can stir up a contrary grace to it, to quell and master it. This is the method of God's Exciting Grace in the preventing of sin, that when the Devil calls forth a particular corruption out of the stock of corruption, God calls forth a particular grace, contrary to it, from the stock of grace.

But yet there are some particular graces, that are more especially employed about this service, and which God doth most frequently exercise, and set on work to keep his children from the commission of sin.

[1] God hinders the commission of sin, by keeping up the lively and vigorous actings of faith.

Indeed if faith fail, all other graces must fail, by consequence. Faith is the soul's steward, that fetcheth in supplies of grace from Christ, in whom is the treasure of it; and distributes them to all the other graces of the soul. Therefore, when Christ tells St. Peter, Luke xxii. 31, that Satan had desired to sift him by his temptations, lest he should be thereby discouraged and dejected, presently he adds, in v. 32, *But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not:* and wherefore his faith, rather than any other grace, but because other graces must take their lot with faith, and must be strong or weak, victorious or languishing, as faith is. And therefore it is called *the shield of faith:* Eph. vi. 16: now the office of a shield is, to defend, not only the body, but the rest of the armour also; and so doth faith, when it is dexterously managed: it keeps both the soul, and its graces also, from the attempts of the Devil. I might be large here, in showing you how faith preserves from sin: as, by deriving virtue and strength from the death and blood of Christ; by pleading God's engagements and promises to tread Satan under our feet; by urging and importuning Christ to fulfil in us the end of his coming into the world, which was to destroy the works of the Devil; and many such ways I might name, by which faith prevents sin, and destroys it.

But, waving them, I shall only mention Two particulars, wherein this energy of faith, in keeping men from sin, is the most conspicuous.

1st. Faith preserves from sin, by bringing in and presenting to the soul eternal Rewards and Punishments.

And that is the peculiar office of Faith. These, indeed, are future unto sense, but they are present unto faith: for faith is the substance of things not seen: Heb. xi. 1. It gives them a being, before they are; and what we hope for or fear, as to come, by faith it is enjoyed or felt, as already present. What a mighty ad-

vantage is this, to preserve men from sinning! Would sinners treat with the Devil, or hearken to a temptation, if they should now see the whole world on flame, angels hastening them to judgment, and Christ upon his throne? here, Heaven, to receive and crown them; there, Hell, with all its horrors, to torment them? Would any of you dare to sin, if all this were before your eyes? Believe it, when faith acts lively, all this is as truly present to the soul, as it is certain it shall once be; and, therefore, no more than we would commit a sin if sentence were now passing upon us, either of absolution or of eternal damnation, at the judgment-seat of God; no more shall we sin, while faith sets these things evidently before our eyes, and makes them as real to us as they are sure.

2dly. Faith preserves from sinning, by representing that God who must hereafter be our Judge, to be now our Spectator and Observer.

It is only an eye of faith, that can discover things future as present, and things spiritual as real. God is a spiritual being, and therefore is invisible to the dull eyes of flesh; but the quick eye of faith can see *him who is invisible;* as it was said of Moses, Heb. xi. 27. It fixeth its eye upon the all-seeing eye of God, and fills the soul with awful thoughts of God's omnipresence and omniscience; that all things are naked and bare before him, in whose company we are wherever we are, and with whom we have to do whatever we are doing. Now consider with yourselves: would you commit such or such a sin, to which possibly you are tempted, if some grave person were in the room with you, whom you did much respect; And, what! shall the presence of a mortal man keep you from sinning, and shall not the presence of the Great God much more? Shall we dare to sin, when God's eye is fixed upon us; when he views not only our outward actions, but also our inward thoughts, more clearly than we can see the faces one of another? It was the wise counsel, that a heathen-man gave to a scholar of his, That if he would preserve himself from doing anything that was indecent, he should suppose some sober and reverend man present with him; and this would keep him from doing that, which he would be ashamed to do before him. Truly, we need not make any such supposition: the Great and Holy God is present with us, in reality; and the eye of faith discovers him so to be: he is always looking on us; yea, always looking into us: and, certainly, this, to one that can exercise the discerning eye of faith, will be a more effectual means to keep a man from sin, than if all the eyes of men and angels were upon him.

[2] As the exercise of faith, so the sprightly and vigorous exercise of Divine Love, is an excellent preservative against sin.

Love will not willingly do any thing, that may offend and grieve the object loved. Love is an assimilating affection: it is the very cement, that joins God and the soul together in the same spirit, and makes them to be of one heart and of one mind: it is the loadstone of the soul, that toucheth all other affections, and makes them stand heaven-ward. When once God hath wrought the love of himself in our hearts, this will constrain us to love what he loves, and to hate what he hates. Sin is the only thing, that God hates; and those, that love him, will not, cannot but hate sin: their love to God will constrain them to do it: Ps. xcvii. 10, *Ye, that love the Lord, hate evil.* And, certainly, the hatred of evil is the best security against the committing of it: will any one take a toad or a serpent into his bosom, to lodge it there? Truly, as utterly impossible it is, while the Exciting Grace of God stirs up and quickens our Love to him, that we should ever embrace a vile lust and lodge it in our hearts; since our sight of the beauty of holiness hath made it ugly, and our love to God hath made it hateful.

[3] To mention no more, a Holy Fear and Caution lest we should sin is a most excellent preservative against sin.

None are so safe, as those, that are least secure. Fear is the best preservative of grace. Whereas those, that are rash and venturous and confident of their own strength, run themselves into many temptations, and come off with wounded and smarting consciences. *Stand in awe,* says the Psalmist, *and sin not:* Ps. iv. 4. The timorous and trembling Christian stands firmest, because such an one is apt, upon every occasion, to suspect his own strength, and to call in God's. And, indeed, when we consider the treachery of our own hearts and the subtlety of the Devil, this holy fear and jealousy is no more than is needful; and it is less than sufficient. A man, that is to wade through a deep river, will first try his footing, before he takes his step: we are to wade through *the depths of Satan,* as the Apostle calls them: and, certainly, it is but a requisite caution, first to try our ground, before we venture upon it; to look about, and consider whether such and such an action be grounded upon a command and secured to us by a promise; whether, if we do it, we shall not lay ourselves open to such and such temptations; or, if we do lie open to them, whether or not we are in God's way, and may expect his protection and preservation. Truly, such circumspection as this is will prove our best security: and, though we are not able, by all our own strength and diligence, to preserve

ourselves; yet, when God sees us so industriously solicitous to avoid sin, he will then come in by his almighty grace that helps not the slothful, but the laborious, and he will keep us from those sins that we cannot keep ourselves from.

3. Now for the *Application* of this.

(1) If it be so, that it is the Almighty Power of God only, that can keep us from sin, this may then be convictive of that error, that now-a-days is very rife in the world, that ascribes our preservation in our standing, not so much to the Almighty Grace of God, as to the Liberty and Freedom of our own Wills.

Truly, this is an opinion, that proceeds much from the pride and stomach of such, who are loth to be too much beholden to the grace of God for their salvation. It is true, no man sins, nor does any man abstain from sin, but it is with his will; but yet, still there is an almighty influence from God: an influence of Common Providence to the wicked, without which they could not so much as will; and an influence of Special Grace to the godly, without which they could not abstain from sin; *It is God*, saith the Apostle, *that worketh in us both to will and to do, of his* own *good pleasure.* It is not, whether or not the will be free in abstaining from sin: that, is acknowledged: but, whether the motion of the will be principally and primarily from God or from itself; and this, the Apostle concludes to be from God. From him it is, that we both will and do: he gives the first beginning: he adds the progress: and he concludes. He first begets grace: then, he increases it: and, at last, he crowns it. All is from God.

(2) This may instruct us, to Whom we ought to ascribe the praise and the glory of our preservation from those foul and horrid sins, that we see others daily fall into.

*Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name,* be all *the praise* and glory. We have natures, as sinful as the worst of men ever had; and, that such sinful natures should not produce as wicked lives, whence proceeds this, but only from the miracle of God's grace? for it is a miracle, that, when the fountain is as bitter, when our hearts are as bad as the hearts of others, yet the streams should not be so. Whence is it, since we have the same corrupt hearts with Cain and Judas and all the wicked rabble in the world, whence is it, that we have not committed the same impieties with them, or worse than they have done? Why, God hath either restrained or sanctified us. But Sanctifying Grace is not enough: for, whence is it, that we have not been drunken, with Noah; adulterers or murderers, with David; abjurers of Christ, with Peter?

are we more holy than they, or are we more sanctified than they? No: it is only our gracious God's vouchsafing to us a constant influence of Exciting Grace, that hath thus kept us from those sins, into which he suffers wicked men to fall; and, not only them, but sometimes his own dear children too. It is not a difference in our natures, it is not a difference from Inherent Grace within us, that makes this difference in our lives; but it is only a difference from the unaccountable Exciting, influencing Grace of God: there lies the difference. Well then, *let not the strong man glory in his strength; but let him, that glorieth, glory in the Lord,* for he is our strength and our deliverer; *What have we, that we have not received; and if we have received, why do we boast as though we had not received?* It is not what we have of ourselves; but it is what we have received from God, and what we do daily receive in a way of special influence, that makes us to differ from the vilest and most profligate sinners in the world: and, therefore, let us ascribe the glory of all to the Almighty Grace of God.

(3) To shut up all, If our preservation from sin be from God, beware then how you provoke him to withdraw and suspend the influence of his grace, whereby you have been preserved, and still are.

Indeed, if we belong to him, he will never so far depart from us, as utterly to forsake us: but, yet, he may so far depart from us, as that we may have no comfortable sense of his presence, nor any visible supports from his grace. We may be left a naked and destitute prey to every temptation; and fall into the commission of those sins, out of which we may never be able to recover ourselves to our former strength, comfort, and stability. We may fall, to the breaking of our bones: and we may rise again, possibly; but it will be to the breaking of our hearts.

So much for this time, and for this subject.

## V.

## THE DREADFULNESS OF GOD'S WRATH AGAINST SINNERS.

*For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing, to fall into the hands of the living God.* HEB. x. 30, 31.

THERE are two principal attributes of God, which the Scripture propounds to us, as the most powerful and efficacious motives to restrain us from sin: and they are his Mercy and his Justice.

Mercy, though it be a soft, yet it is a strong argument, to encourage us to purity and holiness. And, therefore, says the Apostle, Rom. ii. 4; *The goodness of God leadeth* us *to repentance.* And, certainly, that mercy, that expresseth itself so ready to pardon sin, cannot but lay a mighty obligation upon the ingenuity of a Christian spirit, to abstain from the commission of it. He, that can encourage himself in wickedness, upon the consideration of the infinite free-grace of God, doth but spurn those very bowels that yearn towards him, and strike at God with his own golden sceptre: yea he tears abroad those wounds, which were at first opened for him; and casts the blood of his Saviour back again in his face.

But, because ingenuity is perished from off the earth, and men are generally more apt to be wrought upon by arguments drawn from fear than love, therefore the Scripture propounds to us the consideration of the dreadful Justice of God, arrayed in all the terrible circumstances of it; that, if mercy cannot allure us, justice at least might affright us from our sins. And, as those, who are to travel through wildernesses and deserts, carry fire with them to terrify wild and ravenous beasts, and to secure themselves from their assaults; so doth the Great God, who hath to deal with brutish men, men more savage than wild beasts: he kindles a fire about him, and appears to them all in flames and fury; that so he may fright them from their bold attempts, who otherwise would be ready to run upon *his neck* and *upon the thick bosses of his buckler.* Job xv. 26.

And, therefore, in the four preceding verses, we find the Apostle threatening most tremendous judgments against all that should wilfully transgress, after they had received the knowledge of the truth. He tells us, v. 26, that *there remaineth no more sacrifice for* their *sins:* nothing to expiate their guilt; but that they themselves must fall a burnt-sacrifice to the offended justice of God; consumed with that fiery indignation, that shall certainly seize and prey upon them for ever. And, in v. 28, 29, he sets forth the exceeding dread-

fulness of their judgment, by a comparison between those that violated the Law of Moses, and those that renounce and annul the Law of Christ. *He, that despised Moses' law,* who himself was but a servant, and whose laws consisted of inferior and less spiritual ordinances; yet a despiser and transgressor of these was to die *without mercy:* certainly, much sorer judgments await those, who reject the laws of Christ; and trample him, who is the Son and Lord of the House, under foot; accounting his blood unholy and profane, renouncing his merits, and blaspheming the Holy Spirit by which our Saviour acted: such as these, says the Apostle, shall eternally perish with less mercy, than those that *died without mercy.*

Where, by the way, observe the strange emphasis, that the Apostle lays upon this dreadful commination. He tells us that they shall be sorer punished, than those, that are punished without mercy: to let us know, that, as there are transcendant glories, such as *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,* nor can it enter *into the heart of man* to conceive, reserved in the highest heavens for those that love God; so, also, are there woes and torments, such as *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,* nor can it enter *into the heart of man* to conceive how great and insupportable they are, prepared in hell for those that hate him. They shall die with less mercy, than those, that die without mercy.

Now that we might not wonder at such a paradox as this, the Apostle gives the reason of it in my text: *For we know him, that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me.* It is the vengeance of God, and a falling into the hands of God: and, therefore, it is no wonder if their punishments shall be beyond all extremity. They fall under the power and wrath of an Infinite God; which, when we have heaped superlatives upon superlatives, yet still we must express defectively: and all, that we can conceive of it, falls vastly short of reaching but a faint and languishing resemblance thereof. It is a state so full of perfect misery, that Misery itself is too easy a name to give it: yea, whatsoever we can speak most appositely of it, is but diminishing it; for, because it is the wrath and vengeance of an Infinite God, it can no more be known by us, than God himself. Plunge your thoughts as deep into it as you can, yet still there remains an infinite abyss, which you can never fathom.

Oh, that the consideration of this wrath might cause us all to tremble before this Great and Terrible God! that we might so fear it, as never to feel it; and be persuaded to fall down at his feet, that we may never fall into his hands!

And, that we may be thus affected, I have chosen this Text to

set forth the greatness and dreadfulness of that wrath and vengeance, which the Righteous God will execute upon all stubborn and disobedient wretches. A Text, that speaks to us, as God did to the Israelites from Mount Sinai, out of the midst of the fire and blackness, darkness and tempest, in the voice of a trumpet.

And, truly, we have all need to have such rousing truths frequently inculcated upon us; for the best of us are lethargical: and though, sometimes, when our consciences are pinched hard by a severe and searching truth, we start up and look abroad; yet, as soon as the present impression is over, we suddenly close our eyes, and fall asleep again in sin and security. A strange dullness and stupor hath seized us; that we can no longer keep waking, than we are shaken.

And, therefore, as we use to apply fire and burning coals to lethargic persons to awaken them: so we have need to heap coals of fire upon men's heads; to speak with fiery tongues, and thunder woe and wrath and judgments against them, that we may rouse the secure, stupid world.

In the words, we have these Two Parts observable.

An Appropriation of Vengeance unto God: *Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord.*

The Dreadfulness of that Vengeance inferred, from the consideration of the Author and Inflicter of it: *It is a fearful thing, to fall into the hands of the Living God.*

I. I begin with the first of these, GOD'S APPROPRIATING AND CHALLENGING VENGEANCE UNTO HIMSELF. *Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord.*

Which passage the Apostle cites out of Deut. xxxii. 35, 36. *To me belongeth vengeance, and recompense.* And, *the Lord shall judge his people.* It is his great and royal prerogative, that he doth sometimes make use of in inflicting judgments upon the wicked, in this world; but, most especially, in the world to come: and, to this future vengeance, the words ought particularly to be applied.

From this consideration, That Vengeance in a peculiar manner belongs unto the Great God, we may observe,

That GOD HIMSELF WILL BE THE IMMEDIATE INFLICTER OF THE PUNISHMENTS OF THE DAMNED.

It is therefore here, likewise, called a falling *into the hands of the Living God,* which denotes his immediate efficiency in their torments.

It is true, God doth use several instruments of torture in hell. There are the worm, that never dies; and the fire, that never goes

out: which I suppose to be not only a metaphorical, but possibly a material fire; elevated to such a degree of subtlety, as that it shall, at once, torture the soul and not consume the body. And this fire the devils, who are their executioners, will be still very officiously raking about them; using all their malicious art to increase their eternal misery.

But, yet, these things are but small appendages, and only the slighter circumstances of their torments. The most exact and intolerable part of their torture, they shall feel inflicted upon them from another fire; an intelligent, everlasting, and therefore an unquenchable fire: and that is God himself; for so he is said to be, Heb. xii. 29, *Our God is a consuming fire.*

And, though we ordinarily speak only of Hell Fire; yet not only Hell, but Heaven itself is full of this fire.

Consult that place Isa. xxxiii. 14, *Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?* Would not one think, at the very first sound of the words, that the Prophet speaks only of such as should be damned; of such as should be cast into hell, to remain there in everlasting fire and burnings: and demands of them, who among them could endure this? No: but it appears plainly, that this *fire* and *burning* is in heaven itself; and the Prophet, by putting this question, *Who shall dwell with the devouring fire, and everlasting burnings?* asks who shall be saved, and not who shall be destroyed. And, therefore, in the 15th verse, he tells us, that *he* shall do it, who *walketh* uprightly, *and speaketh uprightly; that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing of evil.* Such an one shall dwell with the devouring fire: that is, he shall for ever dwell and remain with God in heaven.

So that we see God is a fire, both to the wicked, and to the godly. To the wicked he is a penetrating and torturing fire; and they are combustible matter for the wrath and vengeance of God to prey upon: but to the godly, he is a purifying and cherishing fire only. And, as lightning doth not only cleanse and refine the air, but rend trees and rocks in pieces, dissolve metals, and break through whatsoever opposeth it in its passage: so this Great and Almighty Fire, only refresheth and comforteth the godly; whereas it breaks and tears the wicked in pieces, and melts them down like wax before the scorching heat of it.

And, though I deny not but there may be somewhat like that which we commonly apprehend when we speak of hell, some un-

quenchable flames prepared by the wisdom and power of God for the eternal torment of those wretches that shall be cast therein; yet, withal, I think that their most exquisite torments shall be from that Fire that is God himself.

For, if we observe it, it is said to be *everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels:* Mat. xxv. 14. Now the devils are spiritual substances, and flames of fire themselves: He *maketh his angels spirits;* and *his ministers,* that is his ministering spirits, whether good or evil, whether the ministers of his wrath and vengeance or the ministers of his mercy, he maketh them flames of *fire:* Ps. civ. 4. They are such piercing and subtle flames, that lightning itself is but gross and dull compared to them.

Yet here is a Fire, that shall torture Fire itself; a Fire, that shall burn those Flames of Fire: and that is God; who, being a spirit and the God of Spirits, can easily pierce and insinuate into the very centre of their beings.

So that the damned in hell shall for ever find themselves burnt up with a double fire: a material fire, suited and adapted to impress pain and torment upon the body, yet without wasting and consuming it; and an invisible, intellectual fire, that shall prey upon the soul, and fill it with unspeakable anguish and horror, and this is no other than God himself.

And, in this, there is a true parallel between heaven and hell. For, as in heaven, though there are many created excellencies and glories, which contribute to the beatitude of the saints; yet their most substantial happiness is derived from their immediate fruition of God: so, likewise, in hell, though there be many created, and, if I may so call them, many invented tortures; yet the highest and most intolerable misery of the damned, is from the immediate infliction and infusion of the divine wrath into them, which no creature doth or can convey to them in such a manner and measure as they there feel it, but God himself pours the full vials of it into their souls. And, therefore, as the saints are called vessels of mercy; so the wicked are called *vessels of wrath, fitted* for *destruction:* Rom. ix. 22: vessels, into which God will pour of his vengeance, and which he will fill brimful with his wrath and fury, for ever.

The Apostle, 2 Thess. i. 9, speaking of wicked men, tells us, that they *shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power.* Where we must not think that this phrase, *from the presence of the Lord,* denotes only that part of their punishment, which we call *pœna Damni,* or "the punishment of Loss:" but rather that it denotes the efficient cause,

of their *pæna Sensus*, or "the punishment of Sense:" not that their punishment shall only be, to be for ever banished from his presence; but that this presence shall be active in inflicting punishment upon them. And we may well read it thus: They *shall be punished with everlasting destruction*, by *the presence of the Lord, and* by *the glory of his power;* for, as God's glorious power is effective of their destruction; so also is his presence of that consuming and tormenting fire.

And, thus much, briefly, for the First thing observable in the Text; namely, God's Appropriating Vengeance unto himself: *Vengeance belongeth unto me*, and it is a falling *into the hands of the Living God.*

II. I come now to the Second thing observable in the words: and that is the DREADFULNESS OF THIS VENGEANCE, inferred from the consideration of the Author and Inflicter of it: for, because it is Divine Vengeance, and a falling into the Hands of the Living God, therefore it must needs be very terrible.

And, here, I shall,

i. TAKE NOTICE OF THOSE EXPRESSIONS THAT MY TEXT AFFORDS, TO SET FORTH THE TERROR OF THIS WRATH: and, then, consider other demonstrations of it.

1. Consider, that *all other Vengeance is as nothing, in comparison of that, which God takes on a damned soul.*

You may possibly have heard of strange and horrid revenges, that some cruel men have carved out unto themselves; putting those, that have offended them, to such tortures, as were altogether unfit for men either to inflict or suffer. All histories abound with such barbarities. I am loth to offend your ears so much as to recount them. Let us only take an estimate, by the dreadful revenge, that David took on the Ammonites: 2 Samuel xii. 31; where it is said, He *put them under saws, and under harrows of iron.....and made them pass through the brick-kiln:* and all this severity, if not to say cruelty, was to revenge the insolent affront done to his ambassadors. It is, doubtless, no small torture to be burnt alive; for fire is a searching thing, and eats deep into the senses: but, yet, this kind of death was a quick and merciful dispatch, in comparison of the others. Think what it is to be stretched along; and to have the sharp spikes of a harrow tear up your flesh, and draw out your bowels and bones after them: or, what it is to be sawn asunder in the midst; and to have those small teeth eat their way slowly through you, while they jar against your bones, and pull out your nerves and sinews thread by thread. How many deaths, think you, were these poor miserable creatures compelled to suffer, before they were permitted to die!

Yet, alas! these, and all the witty tortures that ever were invented by the greatest masters of cruelty, are nothing, in comparison of the vengeance that God will take upon sinners in hell. And, therefore, he says, *Vengeance is mine, I will recompense:* as if he should say, "Alas! all, that you can do one to another, signifies nothing: it is not to be called, nor accounted *Vengeance:* that is too great a name for such poor effects."

It is a prerogative, that God challengeth to himself, to be the *Avenger:* and whatever creatures meddle with, if they have not a commission from him, it is their sin: and therefore private persons whom he hath not invested with any such authority, ought not to take upon them to avenge their own cause; or, if they have a commission, yet all their execution of Vengeance is feeble and weak.

We find in Ecclesiastical History, that the holy martyrs have often mocked at all the cruel tortures of their enraged persecutors. And God hath either taken from them all sense of pain; or else, given them such strong consolations, that they have triumphed and exulted in all the extremity of them. How have they hugged the stake, at which they were to be burnt! courted the beasts, that were to devour them! and been stretched upon the rack, with as much content, as formerly they have stretched themselves upon their beds; and not so much suffered, as enjoyed their deaths! God hath so mercifully taken off the edge and keenness of their torments, to show that vengeance is his right and due; and that they are but contemptible things, that one man can inflict upon another, scarce worthy to be called Vengeance.

And, besides, let it be never so sharp and cutting, yet it cannot be long durable. The more intolerable any torments are, the sooner do they work our escape from them. And, though spite and malice may wish the perpetuity of our pain; yet it is not possible for mortal men to prosecute an immortal revenge: the death, either of them or of ourselves, will put a period to our sufferings. And what a small matter is it, to undergo pain for a few days only! This is not worthy to be called Vengeance; nor is it like that, which the Great God will inflict: which is both insupportable and eternal. And, therefore,

2. The Apostle calls it a falling *into the hands of the Living God.* And this denotes to us *the Perpetuity and Eternity of this Vengeance.*

God for ever lives, to inflict it; and sinners shall for ever live, to suffer it: for they fall into his hands. God hath, as it were, leased out a life to every wicked man: he hath his term of years set him, wherein he lives to himself; enjoying his lusts, and the

pleasures and profits of this present world; and, all this while, Vengeance intermeddles but little with him. But, when his life is expired and his years run out, he then falls into the hands of the great Lord of all, and becomes the possession of his Vengeance and Justice for ever.

And, then, he is *the Living God;* and such wicked wretches must for ever live, to endure the most dreadful execution of his power and wrath. Were there any term or period set to their torments, should they when they have endured them thousands of thousands of years afterwards be annihilated, the expectation of this release, at the last, would give them some support: yea, it would be some solace to them in their sufferings, to think that, at last, they should be freed from them. But this is the accent of their misery, and that which makes them altogether desperate, that it is for ever: for ever, they must lie and wallow in those flames, that shall never be quenched; and shall always be bit and stung with that worm, that shall never die. They are fallen *into the hands of the Living God,* who will never let them go as long as he lives, that is, never to all eternity. He is *a consuming fire,* but yet spends not any part of his fuel: he consumes, without diminishing them; and destroys, but yet still perpetuates their being. "A wise and intelligent fire," as Minutius calls him, "that devours" the damned, but yet still "repairs" them; and, by "tormenting," still "nourishes" them for future torments: *Sapiens ille ignis, urit et reficit, carpit et nutrit.* And, when they have lain burning in this fire all the ages that arithmetic can sum up, millions after thousands, and thousands of millions; yet, still, it is but the beginning of their sorrows.

Oh, think for yourselves, how long and tedious a little time seems to you, when you are in pain; you complain then, that time hath leaden feet; and wish the days and hours would roll away faster with you: and you never find them so slow paced, as when they pass over a sick bed. Oh, then, what will it be, when you shall lie sweltering under the dread wrath and vengeance of *the Living God?* The intolerableness of your pain and torment will make every day seem an age, and every year as long as eternity; and yet you must lie there an eternity of those long years.

Methinks this consideration of Eternal Torments should astonish the heart, and sink the spirits of every wicked wretch: for, though they were not to be so excessively sharp as they are; yet the Eternity of them is that, which should make them altogether intolerable. There is scarce any pain so small, but it would make us desperate, were we assured it would never wear off, that we should

never obtain any ease or freedom from it: whatever pain we suffer, our usual encouragement unto patience is, that shortly it will be over: but, in hell, there is no period fixed to the torments: they are all eternal; and, therefore, whatsoever they are for the degree and measure of them, yet are they utterly intolerable, at least for their duration and continuance. Couldst thou shove away millions of years with a wish, yet all this would avail nothing: for there are as many years in eternity as there are moments, and as many millions of years as there are years; that is, it is an infinite and boundless duration: and, when thou hast struck thy thoughts as deep into it as thou canst; yet, still, thou art but at the top of the heap, and it is still a whole eternity to the bottom.

3. Consider, also, that the Wrath and Vengeance of God is most dreadful, not only from the eternal continuance and duration thereof, but also *from the excessive Anguish and Smart of those Torments that he inflicts.*

Nothing, that we have ever felt or can feel in this present life, can come into any comparison with them: and therefore the Text calls it, a falling into the hands of God. Here, on earth, God's hand doth sometimes fall upon us; and it falls very heavy too, and lays upon us sore and weighty burdens: but these are nothing considerable, to our falling into the hands of God. There is as much difference, between his wrath and displeasure falling upon us, and our falling upon it, as there is, between our having a few drops of a shower falling upon us, and our falling into a river, or into the sea, and being overwhelmed with the great waters thereof: and, yet, how dreadful is it, when God's hand only falls upon us! It was a sad complaint of the Psalmist, Ps. xxxii. 4, that God's hand lay heavy upon him: and, Ps. xxxviii. 2, that God's hand *pressed* him sore.

Grievous burdens and sore pressures may be laid upon us by this hand of God; and that, both as to outward afflictions, and inward troubles.

(1) As to Outward Afflictions, how dreadfully doth God stretch out his hand against some! making wide and terrible breaches upon them: some, in their estates; some, in their relations; and some, in their bodily health and strength. Have you never been about the sick beds of those, that have roared out through the extremity of their pains; when every limb hath been upon the rack, and God hath filled them with a complication of loathsome, tormenting, and incurable diseases? And, yet, all this is but a falling of God's hand upon them.

(2) As to Inward Troubles, we see how God cramps some men's

consciences, breathes fire and flames into their very souls, and makes deep wounds in their spirits; forcing them, through the extremity of their anguish, to cry out, they are damned, they are damned. Yea, some have even wished that they were in hell: supposing those everlasting torments would not be more unsufferable, than what they here felt.

And, indeed, these inward troubles are far more grievous than any outward can be. We hear Heman crying out, that, because of these terrors of the Lord, he *was ready to die from* his *youth up:* and, whilst he suffered this wrath of God, he was even *distracted* with it: Ps. lxxxviii. 15. And Job, whose patience is celebrated for bearing all his outward afflictions, his loss of estate, of his children, of his health, with a heroic constancy, (*Ye have heard,* says St. James, *of the patience of Job*) yet, when God comes to touch his spirit with his wrath, then we hear of his impatience: he curseth the day of his birth; and wisheth that God would destroy him, *that he would let loose his hand and cut* him *off:* Job. vi. 9: and wherefore are these passionate requests? why he tells us, v. 4. *The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit; the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me:* and, therefore, though he could patiently bear all that the rage and spite of the Devil could do against him, when he touched his wealth, when he touched his children, yea when he touched his body; yet his patience could no longer hold out, when God came to touch his soul and conscience.

(3) And, yet, the greatest terrors of conscience, whether in the children of God to their reformation, or in the wicked to their desperation, are still but light and small touches of his hand, in comparison with what shall be expressed hereafter on the damned in Hell. For,

[1] To the godly, all these afflictions are mixed with love and mercy.

They are brought upon them, not as plagues; but as medicaments, to do them good. But, in hell, all is wrath, all is fury; pure wrath and judgment, without mercy. And, certainly, if those sufferings, which are inflicted in love and allayed with mercy, are yet so very dreadful to the people of God, how dreadful will the wrath of God be in hell, where it shall be pure and unmixed, and nothing put into that cup which the damned are there to drink of, but the rankest venom that can be squeezed out of all the curses that ever God hath denounced! And, then,

[2] To the wicked, all the troubles and terrors, which they here

endure, are nothing, in comparison with what they must eternally suffer in Hell.

They are now only sprinkled with a few drops of God's wrath; but, in hell, all his waves shall go over them for ever. Here, they do but sip a little of that cup, and taste a little of the froth of it; and, should they drink deeper, earth could not hold them, but they would grow drunk, and reel and stagger into hell: but, there, they must for ever drink the very dregs of that cup of trembling and astonishment. And thou, who now roarest and strugglest like a wild bull in a net, when God's hand is only upon thee, what wilt thou do, when thou shalt eternally fall into his mighty hands? Thou now criest out of the intolerableness of thy present pain; but, alas! hadst thou but felt one gripe of the torments of the damned in hell, thou wouldst choose to live for ever here on earth in the most exquisite torture that could be devised, choose to bear the sharpest paroxysms of the stone or gout, to be stretched upon the rack, to lie broke upon the wheel, to have thy flesh plucked off by fiery pincers; thou wouldst choose to suffer all these to all eternity; yea, and choose them too as recreations and divertisements, rather than return again to that place of torment, where, not only the eternity, but the smart and anguish of them, is infinite and unconceivable. And, as one day in the joys of heaven is better than a thousand days, nay than a thousand years, in all the impure and low delights of earth: so, one day in the torments of hell, is far worse than a thousand in the sharpest miseries we can possibly endure in this life. Here, our pains usually are but partial: God aims and shoots with his arrow but at some one part of us: if he wound our spirits; yet this invisible shaft, like lightning, passeth through, without making a breach in our bodies, or in our estates; we have still our health and our plenty left us: or, if he strike the body, usually it is but in one, or at most but in some few places, and we enjoy ease in the rest: But, in hell, God doth, as it were, wrap the whole man up in searcloth, and set it on fire round about him, so that he is tormented in every part; neither soul nor body escaping, nor any power or faculty of the one, nor any part or member of the other. When we fall into the hands of God, we are plunged into an ocean of wrath, and are covered all over with his fury and indignation: the Understanding, Will, Conscience, Affections, are all as brimfull of torments as they can hold: for what can be greater anguish to the Mind, than to know our misery, and to know it to be remediless? and what can be greater anguish to the Will and Affections, than most ardently and vehemently to desire free-

dom from those torments, but yet to despair of ever obtaining it? and what can fill the Conscience with greater anguish, than to reflect, with infinite horror and regret, that it was only sinners' own folly and madness that brought them to this woeful and miserable condition? how will they be ready even to rend and tear themselves in pieces, their consciences curse their wills, and their wills curse their affections, and their affections the objects that enticed them to the commission of those sins, the revenges of which they must now eternally suffer! And as for the Bodies of these damned souls, they shall, after the Resurrection and dreadful Day of Judgment, become all fire, like a live coal: fire shall be imbibed into the very substance of them, and they not have so much as a drop of water afforded them to cool the tip of their tongues: Luke xvi. 24.

And this is a Third Consideration of the dreadfulness of everlasting vengeance: it is a falling into God's hands.

4. Consider, *it is a falling into the hands of the Living God himself, and not of any Creature.*

Indeed, we read in 2 Sam. xxiv. 14, that David chose rather to fall into the hands of the Lord, than into the hands of men. It is true, when there are true repentance and hopes of obtaining mercy, this is far more eligible: for the chastisements of the Lord are full of mercy; but *the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.* But, where all hopes and expectation of mercy are excluded, as they are in hell; certainly, there, it is infinitely more dreadful to fall into the hands of a sin-revenging God, than into the hands of all the creatures in heaven, or earth, yea or hell itself.

One would have thought it had been terrible enough, if the Apostle had said, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Devils." And so indeed it were; if we consider, either their power, or their malice. Certainly, they can easily find out such tormenting ingredients, and apply them also to such tender parts, that it would transcend the patience of any man on earth quietly to bear but what one devil can inflict. Do we not often see, in the illusions of black and sooty melancholy; what strange fears and terrors they can imprint upon the fancy; what horror and despair they can work in the conscience; so as to make men weary of their lives, and many times persuade them to destroy themselves, only to know the worst of what they must suffer? And all this he can do out of his own kingdom! What then can he do, when he hath got sinners into his own territories, and under his own dominion! What exact tortures can he inflict upon them there! such, indeed, as we cannot tell what they are; and may it please God we never may!

And, yet, the Devil is but a fellow-creature: but wicked men are

to fall into the hands, not of a creature, but of the Great Creator; into the hands of God himself, whose power is infinitely beyond the devils', so that he is the tormenter even of them.

Think then with thyself, O Sinner, that, if God binds and scourges and torments the very devils, who yet do so insufferably torment the damned; how infinitely intolerable then is that wrath, which God himself shall inflict upon them! Consider with thyself, if thou canst not bear those pains and torments, which the devils inflict; and if the devils cannot bear those pains and torments, which God inflicts upon them; how wilt thou then, O Sinner, be able to bear the immediate wrath, fury, and vengeance of the Great God himself?

Nay, let me go yet a great deal lower; and suppose that God should make use of common and ordinary creatures, for the punishment of wicked men: who is there, that could bear even this?

If God should only keep a man living for ever in the midst of a furnace of gross and earthly fire, how dreadful would this be! If but a spark of fire fall upon any part of the body, consider what an acute pain it will cause: much more, if thy whole man should be all over on a light flame, and thou for ever kept alive to feel the piercing torment of it. And, yet, what is our dull, unactive fire: in comparison of that pure, intelligent fire?

Or, suppose God, who knows the several stings that are in all his creatures, should take out of them the most sharp ingredients; and, from them all, make up a most tormenting composition: if he should take poison and venom out of one, and fire and scorching out of another, and smart and stinging out of a third, and the quintessence of bitterness out of a fourth; and, by his infinite skill, heighten all these to a preternatural acrimony: if now God should apply this composition, thus fatally mixed and blended together unto any of us, what an intolerable anguish would it cause in us!

And, if Creatures can cause such tortures, what a dreadful thing then is it to fall into the hands of God himself! For, when God conveys his wrath to us by creatures, it must needs lose infinitely in the very conveyance. When God takes up one creature to strike another, it is but as if a giant should take up a straw or feather to strike a man with; for, though he be never so strong, yet the blow can be but weak because of the weakness of the instrument: and yet, alas! how terrible are even such weak blows to us! What will it then be, when God shall immediately crush us by the unrebated strokes of his own Almighty Arm; and shall express the power of his wrath, and the glory of his justice and severity, in our eternal destruction.

And this is the Fourth Demonstration of the dreadfulness of divine vengeance.

5. Consider, that the Apostle calls this wrath, which the Living God will inflict upon sinners by the name of *Vengeance. Vengeance is mine, I will recompense* it.

Now vengeance, when it is whet and sharpened by wrath, will enter deep, and cut the soul to the very quick.

God acts a twofold part, in the punishment of sinners.

(1) Of a Judge.

In relation to which, their eternal torments are sometimes called Condemnation: so, 1 Tim. iii. 6, we have mention made of *the condemnation of the devil;* that is, that state of woe and wrath, to which the Devil is for ever sentenced. And, Damnation: Matt. xxiii. 33, *how can ye escape the damnation of hell?* And, sometimes, it is termed Judgment: Heb. x. 27; *A certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation:* and, in Jude 15, *to execute judgment upon all* the ungodly; which denotes that their punishment shall be inflicted upon them from God, as he is a Just and Righteous Judge.

(2) God is an Avenger, as well as a judge.

He is a party concerned; as having been wronged, affronted, and injured by their sins. And, in relation to this, the punishments, that God will inflict upon them, are called Wrath and Fury, smoking Anger and Jealousy: Deut. xxix. 20, *the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man.* Also, *Fiery Indignation:* Heb. x. 27. All which we find amassed and heaped together, Zeph. iii. 8. *My determination,* saith God, *is, to gather the nations..... to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.* All these expressions signify to us, the terribleness of that vengeance, which God will take: for, when the wrath of man only stirs him up to revenge an injury, he will be sure to do it to the very utmost extremity of all his power: and, if the revenge of a poor weak man be so dreadful a thing; how insupportable will be the vengeance of the Great God, who assumes it to himself as part of his royalty! *Vengeance is mine.* See that terrible place, Nahum i. 2, *God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth: the Lord revengeth, and is furious: the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.* God reserveth wrath for sinners, and keeps it up in store; even that wrath, which they themselves have treasured up against the day of wrath.

This Revenging Wrath of God hath these Two things in it, that justly make it dreadful.

[1] In that, Revenge always aims at Satisfaction; and seeks to repair injuries received, by inflicting punishment on the offender.

This gives ease to the party grieved: and, if this revenge be commensurate to the greatness of the offence, he rests satisfied in it. And, therefore, God, speaking of himself according to the passions and affections of men, solaces himself in the thoughts of that vengeance, which he would take upon sinners: Isa. i. 24, *Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries,* I will *avenge me of mine enemies.*

And, oh think how dreadful that revenge must needs be, that shall ease the heart of God; and give him satisfaction, for all the heinous provocations, that sinners have committed against him.

For, consider,

1st. How great and manifold our sins and offences have been: and every act of sin, yea the least that ever we committed, is an infinite debt; and carries in it an infinite guilt, because committed against an Infinite Majesty.

For all offences take their measures, not only from the matter of the act, but from the person against whom they are committed: as a reviling, injurious word against our equals, will but bear an action at law; but, against the prince, it is high treason, and punishable with death. So, here, the least offence against the Infinite Majesty of the Great God, becomes itself infinite: the guilt of it is far beyond whatsoever we can possibly conceive. And, yet, what infinite numbers of these infinite sins have we committed! The Psalmist tells us, *they are more than the hairs of our head:* Ps. xl. 12. Yea, we may well take in all the sands of the sea-shore, to cast them up by. Our Thoughts are incessantly in motion: they keep pace with the moments, and are continually twinkling; and, yet, *every imagination of the thoughts of* our hearts *is evil:* what multitudes of them have been grossly wicked and impious; atheistical, blasphemous, unclean, worldly, and malicious! and the best of them have been very defective; and far short of that spirituality and heavenliness, that ought to give a tincture unto them. And, besides the sins of our thoughts, how deep have our Tongues set us on the score! we have talked ourselves in debt to the justice of God; and, with our own breath, have been blowing up our everlasting and unquenchable fire. And, add to these, the numberless crowd and sum of our sinful Actions, wherein we have busily employed ourselves to provoke the Holy and Jealous God to wrath: and we shall find our sins to be doubly infinite, in their own particular guilt and demerit. And, now, O Sinner, when an angry and furious God shall come to exact from thee a full satisfaction for

all these injuries, a satisfaction in which he may eternally rest and acquiesce, such as may repair and recompense his wronged honour; think sadly with thyself, how infinitely dreadful this must needs be. Assure thyself, God will not lose by thee: but will fetch his glory out of thee, and take such a revenge upon thee, as shall as much please and content him, as his Infinite Mercy doth in those, whom he saves and glorifies. And how great then must this vengeance be!

2dly. Consider, how dreadful a revenge God took on his own Dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, when he came to satisfy his justice upon him for our sins. His wrath fell infinitely heavy upon him: and the pressure of it was so intolerable, that it squeezed out drops of clotted blood from him, in the garden; and that sad cry on the Cross, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* And, yet,

(1st) Our Lord Christ was supported under all his sufferings by the Ineffable Union of the Deity.

He had Infinite Power for him, as well as against him: infinite power to bear him up as well as to crush him: in Christ's sufferings, the power of God seemed, as it were, to encounter with itself; and to run contrary to itself, in the same channel. And, as he had the support of infinite power in his sufferings; so, likewise, had he in the greatest of his agonies the Ministry of Angels, to comfort him, and to refresh the droopings and faintings of his human nature. And,

(2dly) The Infinite Dignity of Christ's Person, being God as well as man, might well compound for the rigour of his punishments; and stamp such a value upon his humiliation, that less degrees of suffering from him might be fully satisfactory. For, indeed, it cannot be but an infinite punishment, for an Infinite Person to be punished.

But, thou, that art but a vile contemptible creature, hast nothing in thy nature wherewith to satisfy the dread justice of God, but only the eternal destruction and perdition of it. Thou hast no worth nor dignity, the consideration whereof might persuade the Almighty to mitigate the least of his wrath and fury towards thee: and, when it falls in all its weight and force upon thee, thou hast nothing to uphold or support thee. It is true, the almighty power of God shall continue thee in thy being: but thou wilt for ever curse and blaspheme that support, that shall be given thee only to perpetuate thy torments; and, ten thousand times, wish that God would destroy thee once for all, and that thou mightest for ever shrink away into nothing. But that, alas! poor miserable wretch, will not be granted thee: no; thou shalt not have so much as the

relief and comfort of dying, nor escape the vengeance of God by annihilation; but his power will for ever so support thee, as for ever to torment thee; which is only such a support as a man receives on the rack or on the wheel; supported, so as they cannot come off: the very engine of their torture upholds them. And, as for any help or relief which the Ministry of Angels will afford thee, think what solace it will bring thee, when God shall set on whole legions of infernal ghosts, black and hideous spirits, as the executioners of his wrath; who shall for ever triumph in thy woes and add to them, hurl firebrands at thee, heap fuel about thee, and fully satiate their malice upon thee, as God satisfies his justice.

And this is one consideration of the dreadfulness of this vengeance: in that it aims at and exacts satisfaction for sin, which will be infinitely intolerable; because our sins are infinite, both in number and heinousness; and because Jesus Christ, who was to satisfy not for his own but for the sins of others, though he were upheld by the divine nature and possibly underwent not such acrimony of wrath as the damned do, yet his sufferings were unspeakable and unknown sorrows: and how much sorer then shall wicked men bear for their own sins, when justice shall come to reckon with them, and to exact from them to the very utmost farthing of all that they owe!

[2] Consider, that Revenging-Wrath stirs up all that is in God against a sinner.

Wrath, when it is whet and set on by revenge, redoubless a man's force; and makes him perform things, that he could not do in his cold blood: it fires all a man's spirits; and calls them forth to express their utmost efforts. So, this Revenging Wrath of God draws forth all the force and activity of his attributes, and sets them against a sinner: and how dreadful then must that execution needs be! We see what great works God can perform, when he is not stirred up thereunto by his wrath and indignation: he speaks a whole world into being, and speaks it with a cold and calm breath: certainly, it was no small piece of work, to spread out the heavens and lay the foundations of the earth, and to work all those wonders of creation and providence which we daily behold; but, yet, all these things God did, if I may so speak, without any emotion. But, when he comes to take vengeance upon sinners, he is then enflamed: all, that is in God, is, as it were, on fire: *Jealousy*, says Solomon, *is the rage of a man*, Prov. vi. 34: now, when God's jealousy shall be stirred in him, think how impetuously it will break forth in the fearful effects of it: Isa. xlii. 13; *The Lord shall stir up jealousy like*

*a man of war: he shall cry; yea, roar: he shall prevail against his enemies.* If the calm and sedate works of God are so great and wonderful, how great then will his vengeance be; when anger, fury, and indignation shall excite and whet his power to show the very utmost of what it can do! and, therefore, though God had inflicted dreadful plagues upon the Israelites in the wilderness, and had shown mighty effects of his power and vengeance, yet we find that the Church blesseth him, that *he turned away his anger, and did not stir up all his wrath:* Ps. lxxviii. 38. But, in hell, God stirs up all his wrath: every thing is set and bent against the damned: and as, to the saints in heaven, every attribute of God concurs to make him merciful and gracious to them; so, to the wicked in hell, all the perfections of God conspire either to stir up and kindle his wrath, or else to assist him in the execution of it upon them: the infinite Wisdom of God contrives their punishments; and which way to lay them on, so that they shall be most sharp and poignant: the Power of God rouses itself against them; and proffers all its succours and assistance unto vengeance: the Eternity and Unchangeableness of God come in as a dreadful addition; and make that wrath, which of itself is unsupportable, to be also everlasting: yea, that sweet and mild attribute of God, his Mercy, the only refuge and the only comfort of miserable mankind, yet even this turns against them too; and because they despised it when it shone forth in patience and forbearance, will not now regard them when they stand in need of its rescue and deliverance: so that all, that is in God, arms itself to take vengeance on sinners. And oh, think how sore and fearful that vengeance will be, when God shall put forth all that is in himself for the executing of his wrath upon impenitent sinners!

And thus I have done with the Demonstrations of the Dreadfulness of God's Wrath taken from the Words in the Text, *Vengeance is mine, I will recompense* it. *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God.*

ii. Let us now consider SOME OTHER DEMONSTRATIONS OF THE GREATNESS OF THIS WRATH. And,

1. It appears to be exceeding dreadful, in that *it is set forth to us in Scripture by all those things, which are most terrible to human nature.*

God maketh use of many metaphorical expressions of things most grievous to our senses, that from them we may take a hint to conceive how intolerable his wrath is in itself.

It is called a *prison:* 1 Peter iii. 19, where mention is made of *the spirits in prison:* that is, the souls of those men, to whom the

Spirit of Christ in Noah went, and preached in the days of their mortal life; but which, for their disobedience, are shut up under the wrath of God in hell. And, certainly, hell is a prison, large enough to hold all the world: Ps. ix. 17; *The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.* A prison it is, where the Devil and wicked Spirits are shackled with chains of massy and substantial darkness: 2 Peter ii. 4, they are, says the Apostle, *reserved* in *chains of darkness, unto* the *judgment* of the great day. And they are there kept *in everlasting chains under darkness;* there being not one cranny in this great prison, to let in the least ray or glimpse of light.

It is called a *place of torment:* Luke xvi. 28. It is a region of woe and misery: wherein horror, despair, and torture for ever dwell; and are in their most proper seat and habitation.

It is called, a drowning of *men in destruction and perdition:* 1 Tim. vi. 9. One would think, that, to be drowned, might signify death enough of itself; but, to be drowned in perdition and destruction, signifies moreover the fatalness and the depth of that death, into which they are plunged.

It is called, a being *cast,* bound *hand and foot, into outer darkness:* Matt. xxii. 13: a being thrown *into a furnace of fire,* to be burnt alive: Matt. xiii. 42, 50.

It is called a *lake of fire*: Rev. xx. 15, into which wicked men shall be plunged all over; where they shall lie wallowing and rolling among millions of damned spirits, in those infernal flames. And this lake is continually fed with a sulphurous stream of *brimstone:* Rev. xix. 20. And this fire and brimstone is that, which never shall be quenched: Matt. iii. 12; *He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*

And, lastly, to name no more, it is called *everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels:* Matt. xxv. 41. And now we are arrived at the highest pitch of what sense can feel, or imagination conceive.

Or, if it be possible, that, in your deepest thoughts, you can conceive any thing more dreadful than this, you may call it a sea of molten brimstone, set all on fire, and continually spewing out sooty dark flames: wherein endless multitudes of sinful wretches must lie tumbling to all eternity; burned up with the fierceness of a tormenting and devouring fire; scourged with scorpions; stung with fiery serpents; howling and roaring incessantly, and none to pity, much less to relieve and help them; grinding and gnashing their teeth, through the extremity of their anguish and torture.

If now you can fancy any thing more terrible and dreadful than

this, hell is that; yea, and much more: for these things are metaphorical; and, though I cannot deny but some of these may be properly and literally true, yet the literal sense of these metaphors does but faintly and weakly show us, what is the least part of those everlasting torments.

2. Another Demonstration of the Dreadfulness of this Vengeance is this, that *it is a Wrath, that shall come up unto and equal all our Fears.*

You know what an inventive and ingenious thing fear is: what horrid shapes it can fancy to itself, out of every thing. Put but an active fancy into an affright, and presently the whole world will be filled with strange monsters and hideous apparitions. The very shaking of a leaf will sometimes rout all the forces and resolutions of men. And, usually, it is this wild passion, that doth enhance all other dangers; and makes them seem greater and more dreadful, than indeed they are.

But, now, here, it is impossible for a wicked man to fear more, than he shall certainly suffer. Let his imaginations be hung round with all the dismal shapes, that ever frighted men out of their wits; let his fancy dip its pencil in the deepest melancholy, that ever any soul was besmeared with, and then strive to pourtray and express the most terrible things, that it can judge to be the objects of fear, or the instruments of torment: yet the wrath of the Great God vastly exceeds all, that fear itself can possibly represent.

See that strange expression, Ps. xc. 11; *Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath:* that is, according to the fear men have of thee, as dreadful and as terrible as they can possibly apprehend thy wrath to be, so it is, and much more. Let the heart of man stretch itself to the utmost bounds of imagination, and call in to its aid all the things that ever it hath heard or seen to be dreadful; let it (as that painter, who, to make a beautiful piece, borrowed several of the best features from several beautiful persons) borrow all the dreadful, all the direful representations, that ever it met with, to make up one most terrible idea: yet the wrath of God shall still exceed it. He can execute more wrath upon us, than we can fear.

Some wicked men, in this life, have had a spark of this wrath of God fall upon their consciences; when they lay roaring out, under despair, and fearful expectations of the fiery indignation of God to consume and devour them. But, alas! this is nothing, to what they shall hereafter feel. God now doth but open to them a small chink and crevice into hell: he now doth but suffer a few small drops of

his wrath to fall upon them. And, if this be so sore and smart, that their fears could never think of any thing more dreadful than what they now suffer; oh, what will it be then, when he shall overwhelm them with a whole deluge of his wrath, and cause all his waves to go over them? *Fear him,* says our Saviour, *which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell: yea, I say unto you, fear him:* Matt. x. 28. Luke xii. 5. And, yet, when we have feared according to the utmost extent of our narrow hearts; still, his infinite power and wrath is infinitely more fearful than we can fear it.

3. Consider *the principal and immediate subject of this wrath of God;* and, that is, *the Soul.*

And this adds much to the dreadfulness of it. The acutest torments, that the body is capable of, are but dull and flat things, in comparison of what the soul can feel. Now when God shall immediately, with his own hand, lash the soul, that refined and spiritual part of man, the principle of all life and sensation; and shall draw blood from it at every stripe; how intolerable may we conceive those pains and tortures to be! To shoot poisoned darts into a man's marrow, to rip up his bowels with a sword red hot; all this is as nothing to it. Think what it is, to have a drop of scalding oil or melted lead fall upon the apple of your eyes, that should make them boil and burn till they fall out of your heads: such torment, nay infinitely more than such, is it, to have the burning wrath of God fall upon the soul. We find that spirits, which are infinitely inferior unto God, can make strange impressions upon the souls of men: and shall not the Great God, much more, who is the Father of Spirits? yes: he can torture them by his essential wrath. And that God, who, as the prophet Nahum speaks, (ch. i. 5, 6,) can melt mountains, and make hills and rocks flow down at his presence, can melt the souls of the damned, like lumps of wax: for, in his displeasure, he doth sometimes do it to the best of men, even in this life: Ps. xxii. 14, *My heart is melted like wax in the midst of my bowels.*

4. The Dreadfulness of this Wrath of God may be demonstrated by this, that *the punishment of the damned, is reserved by God as his Last Work.*

It is a work, which he will set himself about, when all the rest of his works are done. When he hath folded up the world, and laid it aside as a thing of no further use; then will God set himself to this great work, and pour out all the treasures of his wrath upon damned wretches: as if God would so wholly mind this business, that he would lay all other affairs aside, that he might be in-

tent only upon this, having no other thing to interrupt him. Think, then, how full of dread and terror this must needs be, when God will, as it were, employ all his eternity about this; and have no other thing to take him off, from doing it with all his might.

God hath reserved two works, and but two, for the other world: one, is the Salvation of the Elect; and, the other is, the Damnation of Reprobates.

Now it is remarkable, that God's last works do always exceed his former. And, therefore, we find in the Creation of the World, God still proceeded on, from more imperfect kinds of creatures, to those, that were more perfect; until he had fully built and finished, yea carved and as it were painted this great house of the universe: and, then, he brings man into it, as his last work; as the crown and perfection of the rest. So God likewise acted, in the manner of Revealing his Will unto mankind: first, he spake to them by dreams and visions; but, in the *last days*, as the Apostle expresseth it, *he hath spoken unto us by his Son.* So, also, in the Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace and Exhibition of the Messiah: first, he he was made known only by promise to the fathers; then, in types and obscure resemblances to the Jews: but, in the latter days, himself came and took upon him the form of a servant, and wrought out a complete redemption for us. So, usually, the last works of God are more complete, perfect and excellent than the former.

Now God's punishing-work is his last work; and, therefore, it shall exceed in greatness all that ever went before it. In his first work, the creation of the world, he demonstrated his infinite power, wisdom, and godhead; but, in the destruction of sinners, which is his last work, he will manifest more of power and wisdom, than he did in his creating them: and how fearful a destruction then must this needs be!

God hath variety of works, that he is carrying on in this world; and, if his glory doth not perfectly appear in one, he may manifest it in another. But, when he shall confine himself only to two, as he will in the world to come, the saving of the godly and the damning of the wicked, and this without any variety or change; certainly, then these shall be performed to the very utmost of what God can do: for, as he will save the saints to the very utmost; so, likewise, will he damn and destroy sinners to the very utmost.

5. Another Demonstration of the Dreadfulness of this Wrath shall be drawn from this consideration, that *God will for ever inflict it for the Glorifying of his Power on the damned.*

Rom. ix. 22. *What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make*

*his power known:* and, 2 Thess. i. 9. They *shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.*

Now, certainly, if God will inflict eternal punishments upon them to show forth his power, their punishments must needs be infinitely great. For,

(1) All those works, wherein God shows forth his power, are great and stupendous.

Consider what power it was, for God to lay the beams of the world, and to erect so stately a fabric as heaven and earth. The Apostle therefore tells us, that by the *creation of the world,* is understood the *eternal power* of God: Rom. i. 20. When God showed his power in creating, oh what a great and stupendous work did he produce! and, therefore, certainly, when God shall likewise show his power in destroying, the punishments he will inflict will be wonderful and stupendous.

(2) Consider, God can easily destroy a creature without showing any great power; or putting forth his almighty arm and strength to do it.

If he only withdraw his power, by which he upholds all things in their beings, we should quickly fall all abroad into nothing: so easy is it for God to destroy the well-being of all his creatures. But, if God will express the greatness and infiniteness of his power in destroying sinners, whom yet he can destroy without putting forth his power, yea only by withdrawing and withholding it; oh how fearful must this destruction needs be! Alas, we are crushed before the moth; and must needs perish, if God do but suspend the influence of his power from us; how dreadfully then will he destroy, when he shall lay forth his infinite power to do it, who can easily do it without power!

And thus I have laid down some Demonstrations of the Dreadfulness of the Wrath and Vengeance of God; five of them drawn from Words of the Text, and five drawn from Other Considerations.

III. I shall now shut up, with two or three words of APPLICATION.

i. BE PERSUADED TO BELIEVE, THAT THERE IS A DREADFUL WRATH TO COME.

I know well, you all profess that you believe, that, as there are inconceivable rewards of glory reserved in heaven for the saints, so there are inexhaustible treasures of wrath reserved and laid up in hell for all ungodly and impenitent sinners: but, oh, how few are there, that do really and cordially believe these things! Men's own lives

may be evident convictions to themselves, of their atheism and infidelity: for all that dissoluteness, which we see abroad in the world, proceeds much from hence, that men are not persuaded that these dreadful terrors of the Lord which have now been set before us, are anything but an honest artifice. They look upon them, as things only invented, to scare the world into good order, and to awe men into some compass of civility and honesty: they think all those tremendous threatenings, that God hath denounced in his Law to be things intended rather to fright men, than to do execution upon them. And, whereas one of the most effectual motives to piety and a holy life, is, to be persuaded of the terrors of the Lord; these are not yet persuaded, that there any such terrors. But, assure yourselves, these are not the extravagant dreams of melancholy fancies, nor the politic impostures of men that design to amuse the world with frightful stories; but they are sad and serious truths: such, as, however you may now slight and contemn them, yet shall you be woefully convinced of by your own experience; when, after a few years, or possibly a few days, you shall be sunk down into that place of torment, that gulph and abyss of misery, where the Great God shall for ever express the art and the power of his vengeance, in your everlasting destruction.

ii. This speaks ABUNDANCE OF COMFORT TO ALL THOSE, WHOSE SINS ARE PARDONED, AND WHO ARE DELIVERED FROM THE WRATH TO COME.

Look what spring-tides of joy would rise in the heart of a poor condemned malefactor, who every moment expects the stroke of justice to cut him off, to have a pardon interpose and rescue him from death; such, yea far greater, should be thy joy, who art freed merely by a gracious pardon, from a condemnation infinitely greater and worse than death itself. When we look into hell, and consider the wrath that the damned there lie under, oh, to behold them there restlessly rolling to and fro in chains and flames; to hear them exclaim against their own folly and madness, and to curse themselves and their associates as the causes of their heavy and doleful torments; how should we rejoice, that, though we have been guilty of many great and heinous sins, and have ten thousand times deserved hell and everlasting burnings, yet our good and gracious God hath freely pardoned us our debts, and freed us from the same merited punishments.

iii. This also should EXCITE US TO MAGNIFY THE LOVE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST TOWARDS US.

Who, though he knew what the dreadful wrath of God was, how

sore and heavy it would lie upon his soul: yet, such was his infinite compassion towards us, that he willingly submitted himself to be in our stead; took upon him our nature, that he might take upon him our guilt; and first made himself wretched, that he might be made accursed. He drank off the whole bitter cup of his Father's wrath, at one bitter draught; received the whole sting of death into his body, at once; fell and died under the revenges of divine justice, only that we might be delivered from the wrath that we had deserved, but could not bear. O Christian, let thy heart be enlarged with great love and thankfulness to thy Blessed Redeemer: and, as he thought nothing too much to suffer for thee, return him this expression of thy thankfulness, to think nothing too much nor too hard to do or to suffer for him.

iv. YOU, THAT GO ON IN SIN, CONSIDER WHAT A GOD YOU HAVE TO DEAL WITHAL.

You have not to do with creatures, but with God himself. And do you not fear that uncreated fire, that will wrap you up in flames of his essential wrath, and burn you for ever? Consider that dreadful expostulation, that God makes, Ezek. xxii. 14; *Can thy heart endure, or can thy hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee*, saith the Lord? The very weakness of God is stronger than man. God can breathe, he can look a man to death: Job iv. 9; *By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed. They perish at the rebuke of thy countenance:* Ps. lxxx. 16. Oh, then, tremble to think what a load of wrath his heavy hand can lay upon thee: that hand, which spans the heavens; and, in the hollow of which, he holds the sea: Isa. xl. 12. What punishment will this great hand of God, in which his great strength lies, inflict, when it shall fall upon thee in the full power of its might! And tell me now, O Sinner, wouldst thou willingly fall into the hands of this God, who is thus able to crush thee to pieces, yea to nothing? Oh, how shall any of us then dare, who are but poor weak potsherds of the earth, to dash ourselves against this Rock of Ages? Indeed, we can neither resist his power, nor escape his hand: and, therefore, since we must necessarily sooner or later fall into the hands of God, let us, by true repentance and an humble acknowledgment of our sins and vileness, throw ourselves into his merciful hands; and, then, to our unspeakable comfort, we shall find that he will extend his arm of mercy to support us and not his hand of justice to crush and break us.

## VI.

### OF PARDON AND FORGIVENESS OF SIN.

*I, even I, am he, that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.* ISAIAH xliii. 25.

IN the foregoing verses, we have a heavy accusation drawn up against the people of the Jews: in which they stand charged both with sins of omission and of commission.

By the one, they showed themselves weary of God; and, by the other, God became weary of them.

"*Thou hast not called upon me*.....nor *brought me*.....*thy burnt-offerings*, nor.....*honoured me with thy sacrifices*.....*but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel:* as it is in 22d and 23d verses. Thou thoughtest my commands grievous, and my service burdensome: and though, as thou art my sworn servant, I might compel thee to work; yet I have borne with thy sloth, and suffered my work to lie undone. *I have not caused thee to serve with* offerings, *nor wearied thee with incense:* as it is in the 23d verse. Nay, as if rejecting my service had not been indignity enough, thou hast even brought me into a kind of servitude; even me, thy Lord and Master: thou hast wearied my patience; thou hast loaded my omnipotency: *Thou hast made me serve with thy sins; thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities:*" verse 24.

And what could we now, in reason, expect should be the close of so heavy an accusation, but only as heavy a doom and sentence? "*Thou hast brought me no sacrifices:* therefore I will make thee a sacrifice to my wrath. *Thou hast not called upon me;* and, when thou dost call, I will not answer. *Thou hast wearied me with thy sins:* and I will weary thee with my plagues."

But there is no such expected severity follows hereupon: but, *I, even I, am he, that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.* The like parallel place we have concerning Ephraim: Isa. lvii. 17, 18. *He went on frowardly in the way of his* own *heart:* Well, says God, *I have seen his ways:* and, what! with the froward, shall I show myself froward? no: but, *I have seen his ways, and I will heal him.*

Here is the prerogative of free grace; to infer pardon there, where the guilty themselves can infer only their own execution and punishment. It is the guise of mercy, to make strange and abrupt inferences from sin to pardon.

The words are a Gracious Proclamation of Forgiveness; or, an Act of Pardon passed on the Sins of Men: and contain in them Three things.

First. Here is the Person, that gives out this pardon; and, that is, God: accented here by a vehement ingemination, *I, even I am he.*

Secondly. Here is the Pardon itself; which, for the greater confirmation of our faith and hope, is redoubled: *I, even I, am he, that blotteth out thy transgressions.....and will not remember thy sins.*

Thirdly. Here are the Motives, or the impulsive cause, that prevailed with God, thus to proclaim pardon unto guilty malefactors; and, that is, for his own sake. *I am he, that blotteth out thy transgressions, for mine own sake.*

First. As for the First particular, *I, even I, am he;* we may observe, That God seems more to triumph in the glory of his pardoning grace and mercy, that he doth in any other of his attributes.

*I, even I, am he.* Such a stately preface must needs usher in somewhat, wherein God and his honour is much advanced. Is it therefore, "I am he, that spread forth the heavens, and marshalled all their host; that hung up the earth in the midst of the air; that breathed forth all the creatures upon the face of it; that poured out the great deeps, and measured them all in the hollow of my hand; that ride upon the wings of the wind, and make the clouds the dust of my feet?" This, though it might awe and amaze the hearts of men, yet God counts it not his chiefest glory; but, *I, even I, am he, that blotteth out transgressions, and forgiveth iniquities.*

So we find, when God condescends to show Moses his glory, he proclaims, not the Lord, great and terrible, that formed all things by the word of his mouth, and can destroy all things by the breath of his nostrils: no; but he passeth before him with a still voice, and proclaims himself to be, *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.....forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.*

So that, when God would be seen in his chiefest state and glory, he reveals himself to be a sin-pardoning God; *I, even I, am he, that blotteth out thy transgressions....and will not remember thy sins.*

Secondly. As for the Pardon itself, that is expressed in two things: *I am he, that blotteth out....and will not remember.*

Blotting out implies,

*First.* That our transgressions are written down.

And, written they are, in a twofold book: the one, is in the Book of God's Remembrance; which he blots out, when he justifies a sinner: the other, is the Book of our own Consciences; which he blots out, when he gives us peace and assurance. And, oftentimes, these follow one upon the other: when God blots his Remembrance-Book in heaven, that blot diffuseth and spreadeth itself even to the Book

of Conscience, and blots out all that is written there also. Man blots his conscience by committing sin, but God blots it by pardoning it: he lays a blot of Christ's blood upon a blot of our guilt; and this is such a blot, as leaves the conscience of a sinner purer and cleaner than it found it.

*Secondly.* Blotting out of transgression implies a legal discharge of the debt.

A book, that is once blotted and crossed, stands void in law: whatever the sum and debts were before, yet the crossing of the book signifies the payment of the debt. So is it here: *I* will blot *out thy transgressions;* that is, "I will acquit thee of all thy debts: I will never charge them upon thee: I will dash them all out: I will not leave so much as one item, not one sin legible against thee." This is the proper meaning of this expression and notion, of blotting out transgression and sin.

And this is one thing, that pardon of sin is expressed by.

It follows, in the next words, *and* I *will not remember thy sins.* Not that there is truly any forgetfulness in God: no; his memory retains every sin which we have committed, surer and firmer than if all our sins were written in leaves of brass. But God speaks here, as he doth elsewhere frequently in Scripture, by a gracious condescension, and after the manner of men; and it is to be interpreted only by the effects: *I will not remember* their *sins;* that is, "I will deal so mercifully with them, as if indeed I did not remember the least of their provocations: I will be to them as one, that hath utterly forgotten all their injuries." So that this, not remembering of sin, denies not the eminent act of God's knowledge, but only the transient act of his justice; and is no more than his promising not to punish sin: as if God had said, "I will not be avenged on them, nor punish them for their sins."

And here we may see what abundant security God gives his people, that they shall never be impleaded for those sins, which once they have attained the pardon of: they are blotted out of his book of remembrance. And, that they may not fear he will accuse them without book, he tells them, that they are utterly forgotten; and shall never be remembered by him, against them, any more.

Thirdly. Consider the Impulsive Cause, that moves God's hand, as it were to blot out our transgressions: and, that is, not any thing without himself, but, says God, I will do it *for mine own sake.*

This admits of a twofold sense, efficient and final.

*First. For mine own sake:* that is, because it is my pleasure: I will do it, because I will do it.

And, indeed, this is the royal prerogative of God alone, to render his will for his reason: for, because his will is altogether sovereign and independent, that must needs be most reasonable, that he wills. If any should question, why the Lord passed by fallen angels, and stooped so low as to take up fallen man; and, why, among men, he hath rejected many wise and noble, and hath chosen those that are mean and contemptible; why he hath gathered up and lodged in his own bosom those, that wallowed in the filth and defilement of the worst sins, when others are left to perish under far less guilt: the most reasonable answer, that can be given to all, is this, "I have done it, for my own sake: I have done it, because it is my will and pleasure to do it: even the same reason, that God gave unto Moses: *I will be gracious,* because *I will be gracious; and* I *will shew mercy,* because *I will shew mercy:* Exod. xxxiii. 19; which was the same answer, that our Saviour gave to himself: Luke x. 21; *Even so, Father;* because *so it seemed good in thy sight.*

*Secondly. For mine own sake:* we may take in a final sense: that is, "I will do it, because of that great honour and glory, that will accrue to my great name by it."

The ultimate and chief end of God in all his actions, is his own glory. God bestows pardon and salvation upon us, chiefly for the manifestation of his own glory; even the glory of his mercy and free grace. Our salvation is therefore accomplished, that it might be a means to declare to the world how merciful and gracious God is: not so much for our good, as for his glory; not for our sakes, but for his own sake. Such a parallel place we have in Ezek. xxxvi. 22, "*I do not this for your sakes, saith the Lord, but for my holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen.* I will show mercy unto you; not so much that you may be delivered, as that my holy name, that you have profaned, may be redeemed from that dishonour, that you have cast upon it, and may be glorified among the heathen."

And, thus, we have the full interpretation of the words; and, from them, I shall raise and prosecute this Observation.

Doctrine. That THE GRACE OF GOD, WHEREBY HE BLOTS OUT AND FORGIVES SIN, IS ABSOLUTELY FREE AND INFINITELY GLORIOUS.

*I, even I, am he, that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.*

I. Though this doctrine of FREE GRACE hath deserved well of all; as being the best tenure of our present enjoyment, and the best prop for our future hopes: yet hath it, in all ages, found bitter enemies; and, of old, like the procurer of it, been crucified between two thieves, the Gnostics and the Pelagian Heretics.

The Pelagians deprive it of its freedom, and enslave it to the will of man; affirming, that God therefore pardons and saves some, because they will, by the power of their own nature, work faith in themselves: whereas, the truth is, therefore God works faith in them, because he we will pardon and save them. Thus they make Free Grace a handmaid, to wait upon the motions of Free Will. Now this is greatly derogatory to Free Grace, for men to bottom their faith and pardon upon the arbitrariness of Free Will; and not upon the almighty sovereign grace of God, that first moves the will to believe, and then pardons it upon believing.

As these depress the Free Grace of God; so there are others, that ascribe too much unto it: of old, Islebius, in Luther's time; who was the first ringleader: of latter days, the Antinomians. And these think the grace of God is so free, as to supersede all necessity of working, for it or with it; and that it is enough for us to sit still and admire it, and so to be hurried away to heaven in a dream. Nay, some, even in our days, have, upon this principal, arrived to that height of blasphemy, as to affirm, that we never so much glorify Free Grace, as when we make work for it by stout sinning.

i. Now therefore, that we may avoid both these extremes, it will be very necessary to state aright, HOW THE GRACE OF GOD IS FREE, and HOW IT IS NOT FREE.

Now there are many sorts of freedom: a freedom from natural necessity; a freedom from violent co-action, and from engaging promises, and the like: but these are not pertinent to our present business.

When Grace, therefore, is said to be Free, it must be taken in a Twofold sense. Free from any Procurement. Free from any limiting Conditions. And, accordingly, I shall propound the Resolution of Two Questions.

Whether the Grace of God be so Free, as to exclude all merit and desert. And, then,

Whether it be so Free, as to require no conditions.

1. *Whether the Grace of God be so Free, as to exclude all merit and desert.*

In answer unto this Question, I shall lay down Three Propositions.

(1) That the pardoning grace of God is not so freely vouchsafed to man, as to exclude all merit and desert on Christ's part.

There is not the least sin pardoned unto any, but it first cost the price of blood, even the precious blood of the Son of God. It is this blood, that crosseth God's debt-book; and blotteth out all those items, that we stand indebted to him for. As Christ now sues out our pardon, by his intercession in heaven; so he bought out our

pardon, by his sufferings on the cross: for, *without shedding of blood* there *is no remission:* Heb. ix. 22. And, *This is my blood,* says our Saviour himself *which is shed....for the remission of sins:* Matt. xxvi. 28. And, we *are not* our *own,* but we *are bought with a price;* even *with the precious blood of* Jesus Christ, *as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:* as the two great Apostles speak: 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. 1 Pet. i. 19. Some have made bold, and possibly with no bad intention, to call Jesus Christ the greatest sinner in the world; because the sins of all God's people met in him, and were imputed to him: they were his, by a voluntary susception and undertaking. And, if the foregoing expression may be allowed, there is one in heaven, the highest in glory, whose sins were never pardoned; for our Lord Christ paid down the utmost farthing that either the law or justice of God could exact, as a satisfaction for those sins that he voluntarily took upon himself: and, therefore, by Law and Justice, and not by Free Grace, he hath taken possession of heaven for himself, and is there preparing mansions for us. In respect of Christ, we receive nothing of Free Grace, or of Free Gift; but all is by purchase: and, as we ourselves are bought with a price; so is every thing we enjoy: even common and vulgar mercies come flowing in upon us in streams of blood: our lives, and all the comforts of them, much more our future life, and all the means tending to it, are paid for by the blood of Christ. So that the Grace of God is not so Free, as to exclude all merit on Christ's part; who hath purchased all we enjoy or hope for, by paying a full and equitable price to the justice of God.

(2) The infinite Grace of God, in giving Christ to us and his blood for us, through which we have pardon merited, is absolutely free; and falls not under any merit, either of ours or of his.

[1] It falls not under any merit of ours.

For, certainly, could we have merited Christ out of heaven, we might as well have merited heaven without Christ. When God, in his infinite Wisdom, foresaw how we would reject and despise his Son; first spill his blood, and then trample upon it; he did not account this demeanour of ours to be meritorious of so great a gift.

[2] Which is yet more to the glory of God's Free Grace, he bestowed Christ upon us; not only without any merit of ours, but without any merit of his also.

It is Free Grace, that pardons, that sanctifies, that saves us; yet all this Christ purchased for us by a full price. God will have a price paid down for all other things of a less value; that so he might hereby set forth his own bounty, in parting with his own Son for us without price.

(3) Pardon and grace, obtained through the blood of Christ, in respect of any merit of ours is altogether free and undeserved.

We cannot of ourselves scarce so much as ask forgiveness; much less, therefore, can we do any thing that may deserve it. All, that we can do, is either sinful or holy; if what we do be sinful, it only increaseth our debts: if it be holy, it must proceed from God's Free Grace, that enables us to do it; and, certainly, it is Free Grace to pardon us upon the doing of that, which Free Grace only enables us to do. Far be it from us to affirm, as the Papists do, that good works are meritorious of pardon: what are our prayers, our sighs, our tears? yea, what are our lives and our blood itself, should we shed it for Christ? All this cannot make one blot in God's remembrance-book: yea, it were fitter and more becoming the infinite bounty of God to give pardon and heaven freely, than to set them to sale for such inconsiderable things as these are: heaven needed not to have been so needlessly prodigal and lavishing, as to have sent the Lord Jesus Christ into the world, to lead a miserable life and die a cursed death, had it been possible for man to have bought off his own guilt and to have quitted scores with God, by a lower price than what Christ himself could do or suffer.

And, so much, for the resolution of the First Question: God's pardoning grace, though it be purchased, in respect to Christ; yet is it absolutely free, in respect to any merit of ours.

2. The Second Question is, *Whether the Grace of God be so Free, as to require no conditions on our part.*

Of gifts, some are bestowed absolutely, without any terms of agreement; and some are conditional, upon the performance of such stipulations and conditions, without which they shall not be bestowed.

Of which sort, is this Grace of God? I answer,

(1) The Sanctifying and Regenerating Grace of God, whereby the great change is wrought upon our hearts in our first conversion and turning unto God, is given absolutely, and depends not upon the performance of any conditions.

Indeed we are commanded to make use of means, for the getting true and saving grace wrought in us; but these means are not conditions for the obtaining of that grace: for the nature of conditions is such, that the benefits which depend upon them are never bestowed, but where the conditions are first performed: and therefore we call faith and repentance conditions of eternal life, because eternal life is never conferred upon any, who did not first believe and repent. But, certain it is, God hath converted some without the use of ordinary means; as St. Paul, and the Thief on the Cross. Therefore, though we are commanded to use the means; yet the

use of means and ordinances cannot be called conditions of our regeneration. And, indeed, if any thing could be supposed a condition of obtaining grace, it must either be a work of nature, or a work of grace: now a work of grace it cannot be, till grace be wrought; and to go about to make a work of nature a condition of grace, is to revive that old error of the Pelagians, for which they stand anathematized in Count Pallestine many years since. Sanctifying Grace is given freely, excepted from any conditions, though not excepted from the use of means.

(2) Justifying and Pardoning Grace, though it be free, yet is it limited to the performance of certain conditions, without which God never bestows it upon any; and they are two, Faith and Repentance.

And these graces God bestows upon whom he pleaseth, without any foregoing conditions. Faith in Christ is the freest gift, that ever God bestowed upon any; except that Christ, on whom we believe. But pardon of sin is restrained to faith and repentance, as the conditions of it; nor is it ever obtained without them. These two things the Scripture doth abundantly confirm to us: *Whosoever believeth* on *him shall* obtain *remission of sins;* Acts x. 43: *Repent.....that your sins may may be bloted out;* Acts iii. 19: *Whosoever believeth* on *him:* there Faith is made the condition of pardon: *Repent....that your sins may be blotted out;* there Repentance is made the condition of pardon. These two particulars correspond with the twofold Covenant of Grace, which God made with man. His Absolute Covenant, wherein he promiseth the first converting grace: this covenant is independent of any conditions, a copy of which we have in Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27, *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.... and I will.....cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.* And then there is God's Conditional Covenant of Grace, wherein he promiseth salvation only upon the foregoing conditions of faith and repentance: this we have, Mark xvi. 16, *He, that believeth..... shall be saved.*

Thus I have stated the great question concerning the Free Grace of God. The first sanctifying grace of God is so free as to exclude all conditions; but the justifying and pardoning grace of God is limited to the conditions of faith and repentance: and both sanctifying and justifying grace are freely bestowed, without any merit of ours; but not without respect to the merit of the Lord Jesus Christ, who hath purchased them at the highest rate, even with his own most precious blood.

ii. In the next place, I shall endeavour to set before you SOME PARTICULARS, WHEREIN THE GLORY OF GOD'S FREE GRACE IN PAR-

DONING SIN MAY BE MORE ILLUSTRATED; that it may appear God assumes to himself this, as the greatest honour, to be a sin-pardoning God. And,

1. This highly commends the Freeness of Pardoning Grace, in that *God decreed to bestow it without any request or entreaties of ours.*

No rhetoric moved him, besides the yearnings of his own bowels. This was a gracious resolution, sprung up spontaneously in the heart of God, from all eternity. He saw thee wallowing in thy blood, long before thou wert in thy being: and this time was a time of love; even a time before all times. What friend couldest thou then make in heaven? What intercessor hadst thou then, when there was nothing but God? When this design of love was laid, there were neither prayers, nor tongues to utter them. Yea, Christ himself, though now he intercedes for the application of pardon, did not then intercede for the decree of pardon: he could not then urge his blood and merits, as motives for God to take up thoughts of forgiving us; for, had not God done so before, Christ had never shed his blood, nor wrought out salvation for us. What arguments, what advocates did then persuade him? Truly, the only argument was our misery: and the only advocate was his own mercy, and not Jesus Christ.

2. *God pardons sin, when yet he is infinitely able to destroy the sinner.*

And this greatly advanceth the Riches and Freeness of his Grace. The same breath, that pronounceth a sinner absolved, might have pronounced him damned. The angels, that fell, could not stand before the power and force of his wrath; but, like a mighty torrent, it swept them all into perdition: how much less, then, could we stand before him! God could have blown away every sinner in the world, as so much loose dust into hell. It had been easy for his power and justice, if he had so pleased, to have triumphed in the destruction of all mankind, but only that he intended a higher and more noble victory; even that his mercy should triumph and prevail over his justice, in the pardoning and saving of sinners.

3. *God pardons sin, though he might gain to himself a great renown; as he hath on the damned.*

God might have written thy name in hell, as he hath written theirs; and might have set thee up a flaming monument, and inscribed on thee victory and conquest to the glory of his everlasting vengeance: both books were open before him, both the Book of Life and of Death; and the contents of both shall be rehearsed,

to his infinite glory, at the Last Day. Now what was it, that dictated thy name to him? that guided his hand to write thee down rather in the Book of Life, than in the Book of Death? that set thee down a saint, and not a sinner? pardoned, and not condemned? what moved him to do all this for thee? Truly, the only answer that God gives, and which is the only answer that can be given, is the same, which Pilate gives concerning our Saviour, *What I have written, I have written.*

4. *Consider the paucity and smallness of the number of those, that are pardoned.*

Professors of Christianity are calculated, by some, to possess not above the sixth part of the known world; and if, among them, we make a proportionable abatement for those that are professed idolaters, for the grossly ignorant, for the profane, and for the hypocritical; certainly, there will be but a small flock remaining unto Jesus Christ: here and there one picked and culled out of the multitudes of the world; like the olive-berries, of which the Prophet Jeremiah speaks, left on the top of the uppermost branches, when the Devil hath shaken down all the rest into hell. Now is it not infinite mercy, that thou shouldest be found among these gleanings after harvest? that thou shouldest be one of these few? God might have left thee to perish upon the same reason that he left others; but he gathered thee out of all nations, kindreds, and languages of the earth, to make thee a Vessel of Mercy for himself. Indeed, thou canst never enough admire the peculiar love of God to thee herein, till the Last Day; when thou shalt see the small number of those that are saved, standing on the right-hand of Christ, compared with the vast numbers of those that perish standing at the left-hand of Christ, and seest thyself among the small number of those that are saved.

5. This also commends the Freeness of Pardoning Grace, that, *whereas the Fallen Angels themselves were absolutely excepted out of God's Act of Indemnity and Oblivion; yet Fallen Man is again restored unto his favour.*

Them, God *hath reserved in* chains of *darkness, unto the judgment of the Great Day:* us, he hath brought into glorious light and liberty. Our sins are blotted out of the book of God's remembrance: whereas, their names are blotted out of the muster-roll of God's heavenly host.

Now, here, there are Four things, that do greatly advance the glory of Free Grace.

Their natures were more excellent than ours.

Their Services would have been much more perfect than ours.

Their Sins were fewer than ours were. And,

Their Pardon might have been procured at as cheap a rate, and at as little expense, as ours.

And, yet, not them, but us, God hath chosen to be vessels of his mercy.

(1) Their Natures were more excellent than ours.

They were glorious spirits; the top and cream of the creation: we, clods of earth; the lees and dregs of nature: our souls, the only part by which we claim kin to angels, even they are of a younger house, and of a more ignoble extract: how are they debased, by being confined to these lumps of flesh, which, with much ado, they make a shift to drag with them up and down the earth; rather as fetters of their bondage, than instruments of their service! nay, so low sunk are we in this slime of matter, that we have not excellency enough so much as to conceive what a pure, heavenly, orient substance a spirit is. And, yet, such as we are, dust and filth, hath God gathered up into his own bosom; though he hath disbanded whole legions of angels, and sent them down into hell. In these natures of ours, hath the Son of God revealed, or rather hid himself: even he, who *thought it* no *robbery to be equal* with God, thought it no scorn to become lower than angels: *He took not on him the nature of angels; but.....the seed of Abraham.*

(2) Their Services would have been more perfect, upon their restoration, than ours can be.

Indeed, when we arrive at heaven, our services, our love, our joy, and our praises, shall then attain to a perfection exclusive of all sinful defects: but, even then, must we give place to the angels; as in our beings, so in our actings also. Had God restored them and given them a pardon, heaven would more have resounded with the shouts and hallelujahs of one fallen angel, than it can now with a whole concert of glorified saints: they would have burned much more ardently in love, who now must burn much more fiercely in torments: they would much more mightily and sweetly have sung forth the praises of God, their Redeemer, who now curse and blaspheme him more bitterly; and as far out-stripped a saint in the work of heaven, as they shall do a sinner in the punishment of hell. And, yet, Free Grace passeth by them, and elects and chooses narrower hearts to conceive, and feebler tongues to utter, the praises of their Redeemer; whose praises ought therefore to be the more, because he chooses not them that may give him the most.

(3) Their Sins were fewer than ours are.

We cannot exactly determine what their sins were: only the Apostle gives us a hint, that it was pride which gave them their fall: 1 Tim. iii. 6; *Not a novice, lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the Devil.* Whether it was pride, in that they affected to be God, or in that they scorned to be guardians and ministering spirits unto man, or in that they refused to become subject unto the Son of God who was shortly to become man, the Schools boldly enough dispute, but no man can determine: but, whatever it was, this is certain, God was speedy in the execution of wrath upon them; tumbling them all down headlong into hell, upon their first rebellion. The time of their standing in their primitive state is conceived to be very short; for their creation, though the Socinians hold it was long before, must fall within the compass of six days; for, in that space, the Scripture tells us, God made heaven and earth, and all things therein; and, therefore, within the space of six days, he created the angels also: some refer their creation to the First Day's Work; others, to the Fourth Day: and it is probably thought, that Adam's continuance in innocency was not much above one day; and yet, even then, there were fallen angels to tempt him: so that their glorious and blessed state could not, according to this computation, last above six or seven days; such a speedy issue did God make with them upon their very first sin. But, how are his patience and forbearance extended towards sinful man! he drives Adam out of Paradise; but it was of Free Grace that he did not drive him into Hell, where he had but a little before plunged far more excellent creatures than Adam was: his patience is prolonged to impenitent, unbelieving sinners: he bears with their proud affronts; waits their returns; and, with a miracle of mercy, reprieves them for a much longer date, than he did the angels themselves. How much more then ought Free Grace to be extolled by us, which did not so much as reprieve the angels for one sin; and, yet, every moment grants out a free and absolute pardon to his servants, not for one sin, but for reiterated provocations! they could not obtain respite, and we obtain pardon. How many leaves in God's remembrance-book stand written thick with multitudes of sins; and, yet, no sooner doth God write down, but he also wipes out! His pen and his spunge keep the same measure: our sins find constant employment for the one, and God's Free Grace and mercy find constant employment for the other.

(4) Add to this, what some with great probability affirm, The same price, that bought out our Pardon, might have procured theirs also.

By which it plainly appears, that there is no other reason, why our estate differs from theirs, but only God's Free, sovereign Grace. Upon the same account, God might have damned all mankind that he damned the angels for; and, at the same cost, he might have saved all the fallen angels, at which he saved some of mankind. The merits of Christ are the price of our pardon and redemption; and these have in them an infinite worth, and an all-sufficient expiation: not for our sins only; but for the sins of the whole world, both men and devils: the streams of Christ's blood shed on the cross for us, were sufficient to quench the flames of hell, and utterly to have washed away the lake of fire and brimstone: hell might have been depopulated, and those black mansions left void without inhabitants for ever, and the devils and men might have been common sharers in that same common salvation; for, Christ having an infinite dignity in his person, being God as well as man, his blood the blood of God, his sufferings the sufferings and humiliation of a God, this enhanced his merits to such a redundancy, as neither Fallen Angels nor Fallen Men, were their sins more and their miseries greater, were ever able to drain out: not a drop more of gall and wormwood should have been squeezed into the cup of Christ's sufferings, though it had proved a cup of health and salvation to them, as well as to us. And, yet, such was God's dreadful severity, that he excluded the angels from the benefits of Christ's death, though he had been at no more expenses to save them; the price of whose pardon and redemption would have been the same: and yet we, such are the infinite riches of his grace and mercy, are redeemed by a price that infinitely exceeds the purchase! Oh, the freeness and riches of God's grace, that he should thus pass by the angels, and pitch upon and choose such vile wretched creatures as we are!

6. *Pardoning Grace is Free; whether we consider the Generality of its Designation, or the Speciality of its Application.*

(1) It is Free, in its General Designation; in that God hath designed and purposed, to forgive the sins of all the world, if they will believe and repent.

It is the universality of grace, that mightily exalts its freeness. Now what can be more universal, than that proclamation of pardon, that God makes to poor sinners, in Acts x. 43, *Whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins?* The whole world is under this conditional promise: not one soul of man excepted: be thy sins more than sands, greater than mountains; though the cry of them reacheth up to heaven, and the guilt of them reacheth down to hell; yet thou hast no reason, O Sinner, to exclude thy-

self from pardon, for God hath not: only believe and repent. But, as general as this pardon is, yet is there somewhat that is discriminating in it, that makes it more illustrious; for it is not tendered to devils and damned spirits: Christ is not appointed to be a Saviour unto them, nor is his blood a propitiation for their sins: they are not under any covenant of grace, nor have they any promise of mercy, no not so much as conditional: it is not said unto them, "Believe, and you shall be rescued from the everlasting residue of your torments; believe, and those unquenchable flames, you are now burning in, shall be put out:" no; God requires no such duty from them, neither hath he made any such promise to them; yea, should it be supposed, that they could believe, yet this their faith would not at all avail them, because God hath ordained no ransom for them, and resolves to receive no other satisfaction to his justice than their personal punishment. But, while we are alive, we are all the objects of God's Free, pardoning Grace. And, if any man, that hears the sound of the Gospel, and upon what terms God hath proclaimed forgiveness of sin, shall notwithstanding perish in his sins, it is not because God hath excluded him from pardon, which he doth, seriously and with vehement importunity, offer and urge upon him; but because he excludes himself, by his own impenitency and unbelief, in not accepting of it.

(2) Pardoning Grace is Free, in the Special Application of it.

The application of pardon is not made unto any, till the performance of those conditions upon which pardon is tendered; and they are Faith and Repentance. Now, herein, is God's Grace infinitely Free, who first fulfils these conditions in his children, that so he may fulfil his gracious promises unto them of life and pardon. The Conditional Covenant of Grace promises pardon and remission of sins, unto all, that shall believe and repent: but, notwithstanding all this, the whole world might perish under a contracted impotency, whereby they could not believe nor repent, did not the Absolute Covenant engage God's truth to work faith and repentance in the hearts of his people. So that one covenant promiseth pardon, if we believe and repent; and the other covenant bestows this faith and repentance upon us: the Conditional Covenant promiseth pardon of sin and salvation, if we believe and repent; and the Absolute Covenant promiseth faith and repentance to us, to enable us to believe and repent. And what could God do more, that might farther express the Freeness of his Grace to us, than to pardon, upon condition of faith and repentance, which faith and repentance he works in us? This is to pardon us as freely, as if he had pardoned us without any faith or repentance at all.

7. *God sometimes selects out the Greatest and most Notorious sinners, to vouchsafe grace and pardon to them; when he suffers others eternally to perish under far less guilt.*

He makes a difference in his proceedings, quite contrary to the difference which he finds in men's demerits. And wherefore is this, but only to show forth the absolute Freeness of his Grace? Greater debts are blotted out, when smaller stand still upon the account, only that it may be known, that God is free to do what he will with his own; and that he will show mercy to whom he will show mercy, and whom he will he pardons. How many heathens, men of improved natural endowments and proportionable virtues, yet, not having faith in and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, are excluded from pardon and forgiveness, whose sins rather show them to be Men, than not to be Christians! Whereas others, under the noon-tide of the Gospel, are guilty of such flagitious crimes, that show them to be monsters, rather than men; and yet these, upon their faith and repentance, obtain pardon and remission: as if it were with God, as it is with men; the more there is to be remembered, the sooner he forgets. These riches of pardoning grace, St. Paul admires and adores, when he tells us, concerning himself, I was *a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy:* 1 Tim. i. 13.

8. *God decrees to pardon, without foresight of merit or worth in us.*

When we lay before him, as the objects of his mercy, Divine Love did not foresee any attractive comeliness in us, but made it. When we were *cast* forth *to the loathing of* our *persons,* yet then was it a *time of love;* and even then, when we were *in* our *blood,* God said to us, *Live.* When we were full of *wounds, bruises, and putrifying sores,* divine love condescended to bind them up and cure them. Such miserable deformed creatures were we! and could there be anything amiable in such an object as this? only, hereby, God puts an accent on the riches of his love; laying it out upon such as were not worthy, with a design to make them worthy.

9. *God pardons, not only though he saw no merit in us; but, which is more to the glory of his Free Grace, though he foresaw that many future wrongs and injuries would be added to those which we had already done.*

He foresaw all our provocations and rebellions; how we would abuse his grace, and turn it into wantonness: he saw the rebellions of our unregeneracy, and the infirmities of our converted state. Yet, though he foresaw all before they were, he resolved not to see them when they are: Numb. xxiii. 21; *He hath not beheld iniquity*

*in Jacob,* nor.....*perverseness in Israel.* And this, though it ought not to encourage us in sin; yet it may be a support and comfort to us, when, through weakness and infirmity, we have sinned; that God, who loved us and decreed to pardon us, when he foresaw how sinful we would be, will not certainly now cease to love us and pardon us, when we are as vile and sinful as he foresaw we should be.

10. *The Lord Jesus Christ, by whom alone we are pardoned, is freely given to us by the Father.*

What price could we have offered, to have brought down the Son of his Eternal Love from his embraces? What was there in us, to draw a Saviour out of heaven? Were we so amiable, as to move him to divest himself of his glory, and to eclipse his Deity in our mortal bodies, only that he might become like such poor worms as we are, and take us unto himself? Ask no more? but admire; *God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him* might *not perish, but have everlasting life.* Here is a mystery, that the whole College of Angels can never comprehend! What, God condemn his Son, that he might pardon rebels! The Son of God blot his Deity in our flesh, only that he might blot out our transgressions with his blood! This is such transcendently Free Grace and Love, that in this we have an advantage above the angels themselves; standing higher in the face of God, upon this account, than they do.

Now compact all these Ten Particulars, in your thoughts, together, wherein the freeness of pardoning grace most illustriously appears; and you will find there is good reason for God, in the text, triumphantly to ascribe to himself, *I, even I, am he, that blotteth out* your *transgressions.*

iii. The APPLICATION, which I shall make of this truth, I shall only briefly mention.

1. Is the Pardoning Grace of God thus Free? *Take heed then, that you do not abuse nor turn it into wantonness.*

Shall we continue in sin, because God so freely pardons sin? God forbid! who would make such an accursed inference as this, that ever had the least sense or touch of divine love upon his heart? Every one loves to have his ears tickled, with this soft, sweet, downy doctrine of God's Free Grace and Love; and, when they hear it, they stretch themselves upon it, and lull themselves fast asleep in sin: but what says the Wise Man, Prov. xxv. 27? *It is not good to eat much honey.* No: there is no such dangerous surfeit, as upon the sweet and luscious truths of the Gospel. This honey leaves a deadly sting in men, that abuse it to encourage

themselves in sin. It is such disingenuity, to argue from freeness of pardon to freedom in sinning, that, I dare say, No heart ever had a pardon sealed to it by the witness of the Spirit of God, but utterly abhors it. What! therefore to provoke God, because he is ready to forgive! What! to multiply sin, because God is ready to pardon! What is this, but to spurn at those bowels of mercy, that yearn towards us; and even to strike at God with that golden sceptre, that he holds out to us, as a token of love and peace? Certainly, they, who thus argue and who thus act, never knew what a sweet and powerful attractiveness there is, in the sense of pardoning grace and love, to win over the heart, from the practice of those sins that God hath forgot to punish.

2. *This should engage us to love that God, who so loved us, as freely, for his own sake, to forgive us such vast debts and such multiplied sins.*

This is the import of that speech of our Saviour, he loveth most, to whom most is forgiven. And, hence it is, and you may commonly observe it, that none are such great lovers and admirers of Free Grace, as those, who, before conversion, were the vilest and most flagitious sinners.

3. *Since God doth so freely pardon us, let it teach us, and prevail with us, to pardon and forgive the offences of others.*

This is that, which the Scripture doth urge, as the most natural inference of this doctrine of God's pardoning grace. Thus the Apostle: Eph. iv. 32; *Be ye kind to one another; tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you.* Say not, as ignorant people are wont to do, "I will forgive, but I will never forget;" for God doth forgive and forget too: I will blot out your transgressions, and I will remember your sins no more. Your sins against God are talents; others' offences against you are but pence: and if, for every trivial provocation, you are ready to take your brother by the throat, and wreak your wrath and vengeance upon him, may you not fear lest your Lord and Master, to whom you stand deeply indebted, should also deal so with you, for far greater crimes than others can be guilty of against you, and cast you into prison until you have paid the utmost farthing; especially considering that you pray for the forgiveness of your own sins, as you do proportionably forgive the sins of others: *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.*

And, thus, I have opened and demonstrated unto you the former part of the doctrine, That the Grace of God, whereby he blots out and forgives sin, is absolutely Free.

II. I am now, in the next place, to prove, that it is infinitely GLORIOUS

This I shall endeavour to do, by considering pardon of sin, in the Nature of it, in the Concomitants of it, and in the Effects and Consequences of it: from all which it will appear, both how great a mercy it is to us, and how great a glory it is to God, that he blots out and forgets sin. And,

i. Let us consider the NATURE of pardon of sin: what it is.

And this we cannot better discover, than by looking into the Nature of Sin.

*Sin*, therefore, as the Apostle describes it, *is* a *transgression of the Law*. Now to the validity of any Law, there are penalties, literally expressed or tacitly implied, which are altogether necessary. The guilt contracted by the transgressing of the Law, is nothing but our liableness to undergo the penalty threatened in the Law. And this guilt is twofold: the one intrinsical and necessary; and that is the desert of punishment, which sin carries always in it: the other is extrinsical and adventitious, by which sin is ordained to be punished. These two things are in every sin. Every sin deserves death; and God hath, in his Law, ordained and threatened to inflict death for it.

Now it being clear, that Pardon and Remission of Sin is nothing but the removal of the guilt of sin; the question is, Whether it removes that guilt, that consists in the desert of punishment; or that, which consists in the voluntary appointment of it unto punishment; or both.

To this, I answer, Pardon of Sin doth not remove the intrinsical desert of punishment; but only the adventitious appointment and ordination of it unto punishment, flowing from the will of God, who hath in his own Law, threatened to punish sin. Remission doth not make, that the sins, even of believers themselves, should not deserve death; for a liableness to the penalty of the Law, in this sense, is a necessary consequent upon the transgression of the Law: but, because God, in the Covenant of Grace, hath promised not to reward his penitent servants according to the evil of their doings, therefore Pardoning Grace removes this guilt of sin arising from God's ordination of it unto punishment. As, suppose a traitor should accept of the proffer of a pardon, the guilt of his treason ceaseth not in the inward nature of it, but still he deserves to be punished; but this obnoxiousness of his, through the prince's favour and appointment is taken away, and so that guilt ceaseth: so every sin, which the repenting sinner commits, deserves death; but, upon his believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, this liableness unto death ceaseth, being graciously remitted to him by God.

The Scripture sets forth this Pardon of Sin, in very sweet and full expressions. It is called a covering of sin: Ps. xxxii. 1; *Blessed is* the man, *whose transgression is forgiven,* and *whose sin is covered:* though our covering of our sins is no security from the inspection of God's eye, who clearly beholds the most hidden and secret things of darkness; yet, certainly, those sins, that God himself hath covered from himself, he will never again look into, so as to punish for them. Nay, yet farther, as a ground of comfort, Pardon of Sin is not only called a covering of our sins from God's sight, but a covering of God's face and sight from them: so we have it, Ps. li. 9; *Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.* It is a casting of our sins behind God's back, as a thing that shall never more be regarded or looked upon: so it is expressed to us, Isa. xxxviii. 17. *Thou hast, in love to my soul,* says good Hezekiah, when a message of death was brought to him by the prophet, *cast all my sins behind thy back.* It is a casting of them into the depth of the sea; from whence they shall never more arise, either in this world to terrify our consciences, or in the world to come to condemn our souls: so we have it in Micah vii. 19, *I will cast all their* iniquities, says God, *into the depths of the sea.* It is a scattering of them, as a thick cloud: so it is called, Isa. xliv. 22; I will scatter their sins *as a cloud,* and their iniquities *as a thick cloud.* And, in the Text, it is called a blotting out and a forgetting of sin: *I, even I, am he, that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins:* a blotting out, to show, that God will never read his debt-book against us; and, a forgetting it, that we may not fear, that God will accuse us without-book.

These, and such like expressions, with which the Scripture doth abound, do very much illustrate the mercy of God, in pardoning of sin; and I shall unfold it in these following particulars.

1. *Pardon and remission of sin, is no act of ours, but an act of God's only.*

It is nothing done, by us, or in us; but an act of God's Free Grace merely, without us: and therefore God ascribes it wholly unto himself: *I, even I, am he.* And when our Saviour cured the paralytic, the Scribes stormed at him as a blasphemer: *Thou blasphemest,* say they to him, not knowing him to be God: *for who,* say they, *can forgive sins but God only?*

But, be it an act of God's only, and not ours, and an act wholly without us, what comfort is there in this?

Much: and that, upon these grounds; because God's acts within us are always imperfect in this life, but God's acts without us are

always perfect and consummate. Sanctification is a work of God's grace within us: now this work, because it meets with much opposition in every faculty, from inherent sin which spreads itself over the whole soul, is therefore always in this life kept low and weak. But Pardon of Sin, is an act without us, in the breast of God himself, where it meets with no opposition or allay: nor doth it increase by small degrees; but is, at once, as perfect and entire, as ever it shall be.

I do not mean, as some have thought and taught, that God, at once, pardons all the sins of true believers; as well those they do or shall commit, as those they have already committed: but, only, that what sins God pardons, he doth not pardon gradually. There is nothing left of guilt upon the soul, when God pardons it; but there is something left of filth upon the soul, when God sanctifies it.

And, therefore, as it is the grief of God's children, that their inherent holiness is so imperfect here, that they are so assaulted with temptations, so dogged by corruption, so oppressed and almost stifled to death by a body of sin that lies heavy upon them; yet this, on the other side, may be for their comfort and encouragement, that God's pardoning grace is not as his sanctifying grace is, nor is it granted to them by the same stint and measure. A sin, truly repented of, is not pardoned to us by halves; half the guilt remitted, and half retained: as the Papists fancy, to establish their doctrine of purgatory: but it is as fully pardoned as it shall be in heaven itself. And hence it follows,

(1) Though the guilt of sin be removed; yet it is not our repentance that removes it.

For then, as no man's repentance is absolutely perfect, so no man's sins should be fully pardoned; but still there would be remainders of guilt left upon the conscience, as there is still a mixture of impenitency in the best Christians. But pardon and remission is not mingled with guilt, as grace is with sin; because it is an act of mercy wrought, not in our breasts, but arising in God's only, where it meets with nothing to allay or abate it, and it is infinitely more perfect than our repentance can be.

(2) Hence we may infer, That our pardon is infinitely more sure, than our assurance of it in our own consciences can be satisfactory.

For the sense of pardon is a work of God's Spirit within us, which commonly is mixed with some hesitations, misgivings, doubts, and fears: and, therefore, though our comforts be never so strong, though it be spring-tide with us, yet our ground for comfort is still much more. Oh what rich and abundant grace is this in God to-

wards us, that exceeds both our grace and our comfort! and, therefore, though, O Christian, thy sanctification be the best evidence of thy justification and pardon; yet is it not the best measure of it: for thou art justified and thou art pardoned, much more than thou art sanctified. Sanctifying grace in thee, indeed, is in its first rudiments and inchoation; but pardoning grace in thy God is consummate and perfect. And that is the first thing.

2. *Remission of sin makes sin to be, as if it had never been committed.*

Things, that are forgotten, are no more to us, than if they had never had a being. Now God tells us, that he forgets our sins: *Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.*

Nor is there any long tract of time required, to wear the idea of them out of his memory; as is necessary among men, to make them forget the wrongs and injuries done to them by their fellow-creatures: for God forgets the sins of his children, as soon as they are repented of; yea, sometimes sooner than our consciences do: for, many times, a Christian, after a heart-breaking repentance for some great sin, lies under the upbraidings of conscience, when God hath forgiven it; yea, and forgotten it also. God's officer is not so ready to acquit them, as God himself is. He forgets, as though no provocation or offence had ever been committed. *He retaineth not his anger for ever,* says the Prophet: Micah vii. 18; not for ever; but, so soon as ever we grow displeased with ourselves, he begins to be well-pleased with us: no sooner do sorrow and grief overspread our faces, but favours and smiles clear up his face to us.

See this gracious disposition of God, in Jer. xxxi. 19, 20. Ephraim is there brought in bewailing his sin: *Surely,* says he, *after that I was turned, I repented; and, after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.* Now, what doth God, but presently embrace him, with most tender and most melting expressions of love, as if he had never been angry, nor had any cause for it? *Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him: I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord.*

And, therefore, O Christian, thou, who now perhaps criest out in the bitterness of thy soul, "Oh, that I had never committed this or that sin against God! Oh, that I had never offended him in this or that manner!" why thou hast thy wish, O Sinner, herein: for God, when he pardons sin, makes it as if it had never been committed against him.

3. Hence it follows, That, *upon remission of sin, God no longer accounts of us as sinners, but as just and righteous.*

It is true, after a pardon is received, we still retain sinful natures: still, original corruption is in us, and will never totally be dislodged out of us, in this life: but, when God pardons us, he looks not upon us, as sinners, but as just and righteous. A malefactor, that is discharged by satisfying the Law or by the prince's favour to him, is no more looked upon as a malefactor; but as just and righteous, as if he had never offended the law at all. So is it here: we are both ways discharged from our guilt; by satisfaction unto the penalty of the Law, in Christ, our Surety; and by the free grace and mercy of God, who hath made and sealed to us a gracious act of pardon in Christ's blood: and, therefore, we stand upright in Law; and are as just and righteous in God's sight, as if we had never sinned against him.

Oh, how great consolation is here, unto the children of God! They account themselves great sinners, yea, the greatest and worst of sinners; but God accounts them just and righteous. They keep their sins in remembrance, as David speaks, *My sin is ever before me;* when God hath not only forgiven, but forgotten them. They write and speak bitter things against themselves; when God is writing out their pardon, and setting his seal unto it.

4. *Pardoning grace can as easily triumph, in the remitting of great and many sins, as of few and small sins.*

What a great blot upon the heavens is a thick cloud, and yet the beams of the sun can pierce through that, and scatter it easily. God will blot out our transgressions as a thick cloud: so himself tells us, by the Prophet: Isa. xliv. 22; I will blot *out thy transgressions, as a cloud;* and thine iniquities *as a thick cloud.* A great debt may as easily be blotted out, as a small one. Ten thousand talents is a great sum; yet it is as easily and freely forgiven, by the Great God, as a few pence. God proclaims himself, to be a God *pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin;* that is, sins of all sorts and sizes. The greatest sins, repented of, are no more without the extent of divine grace and mercy; than the least sins, unrepented of, are without the cognizance of divine justice. Isa. i. 18; *Though your sins be as scarlet,* yet shall they become *as white as snow: though they be red* as *crimson,* yet *they shall be as wool.*

And can there then be found a desparing soul in the world, when the Great God hath thus magnified his grace and mercy above all his works; yea, and above all ours also? Say not then, O Sinner, "My sins are greater than can be forgiven:" this is to stint and limit the grace of God, which he hath made boundless and infinite; and thou mayest, with as much truth and reason, say, thou art

greater than God, as that thy sins are greater than his mercy. Of all things in the world, take heed that thou be not injurious to this rich grace, to this free love and mercy, that pardons thee even for its own sake. God pardons thee for himself, for his own sake; and dost thou fear, O penitent believing soul, that ever he will condemn thee for thy sins? no; but as much as God and his mercy are greater than our sins, so much more reason will he find in himself to pardon the repenting believing sinner, than he can find reason in his sins to condemn him.

Thus we see what cause of comfort there is in this Pardoning Grace of God. And thus also we have considered Pardon of Sin in its own Nature.

ii. We shall now consider Pardon of Sin in its CONCOMITANTS and ADJUNCTS.

And so we shall take a view of those things, which do inseparably accompany it: and thereby also we may see, how great and unspeakable a mercy it is.

It is a mercy, that is never bestowed upon the soul singly and alone; but ever more comes environed with whole troops of associate-blessings. As,

1. *Pardon of Sin is always enjoined with the Acceptation of our Persons.*

Indeed these two are the twin parts of our Justification: and, therefore, we have them coupled together, Eph. i. 6, 7; *He hath made us accepted in the Beloved: In whom we have redemption through his blood,* even *the forgiveness of sins.* The whole mystery of our Justification stands in these two things, Remission and Acceptation. Remission takes away our liableness unto death, and Acceptation gives us a right and title unto life: for, to be accepted of God in Christ, is no other, than for God, through the righteousness and obedience of Christ imputed to us, to own and acknowledge us, as having a right and title unto heaven. And, therefore, we have mention made of Pardon and an Inheritance together, as the full sum of our Justification: Acts xxvi. 18; *That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among* those that *are sanctified.* It is not, therefore, O Soul, a bare negative mercy, that God intends thee, in the pardon of thy sins: it is not merely the removing of the curse and the wrath, that thy sins have deserved; though that alone can never be sufficiently admired: but the same hand, that plucks thee out of hell by pardoning grace and mercy, lifts thee up to heaven by what it gives thee together with thy pardon, even a right and title to the glorious inheritance of the saints above.

2. Another concomitant is this: *Whomsoever God pardons, he doth also in some measure Sanctify.*

He subdues our sins, as well as blots them out: he abates their power, as well as removes their guilt. And, indeed, it were no better than lost labour, for God to pardon sin, if he did not purify the sinner also: for, were but the least sin and corruption left to rule and reign in us, we should presently run ourselves as far into debt and arrears, as ever we were. Indeed, the best Christian, in whom grace is most prevailing and corruption weakest, yet even he stands daily and hourly in need of pardoning mercy: but yet, withal, his sins are not of so high a nature, nor so deep a stain, as usually the sins of wicked men are: his sins usually are such, rather for the manner of them, than for the matter of them: God, by his pardoning grace, forgives infirmities, failings, and defects; and, by his sanctifying grace, ordinarily keeps him from the commission of more gross and scandalous sins. And how then can we enough admire the rich grace of God, that not only forgives us our debts, but withal bestows a new stock upon us, to keep us from running into debt again, in any great and desperate sums!

3. Pardon of Sin is always conjoined *with our Adoption into the Family of Heaven.*

Herein is the love of God greatly seen: not only to pardon rebels; but to make them his children: not only to forgive debtors; but to make them heirs of his own estate. The same precious blood, that blots out our sins, writes us down heirs of glory and co-heirs with Jesus Christ himself. Oh infinite and unspeakable mercy of God, thus richly and bountifully to give, as well as freely to forgive! that he should thus instate us, at present, in his love and favour; and, hereafter, instate us in his glory! This is not the manner of men, O Lord; but, as far as the heavens are above the earth, so far are the thoughts of God above our thoughts, and his ways above our ways: and, therefore, *as far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our sins from us:* and why so far? but only that he might make room for these great and unspeakable mercies of Justification, Sanctification, and Adoption to intervene.

And, so much, for the Second thing proposed, namely, the Concomitants and Adjuncts of Pardon of Sin.

iii. Let us now consider, Pardon of Sin, in the EFFECTS and CONSEQUENCES of it.

And from hence also it will appear, how transcendent a mercy it is, and how just a title God hath to glory in it, when he saith, *I, even I, am he, that blotteth out thy transgressions.*

Mercies temporal and spiritual, the blessings of this life and the glory of a future, whatever indeed can be called a mercy or good thing, doth acknowledge itself a retainer to this primitive and fountain-mercy of Pardon of Sin.

In such a heap of them, I shall only cull some few that are most conspicuous.

Remission of sin may be considered, either as it lies in God's eternal Intention, or in the Spirit's temporal Application of it. The one, is God's purpose, before all time, to forgive us: the other, is the execution of that purpose, in time.

1. If we consider Pardon of Sin *in God's Eternal Purpose and Intendment*, so there are two blessed effects flowing from it: and they are these.

The sending of Jesus Christ into the world.

The great gift of Faith.

(1) The sending of Jesus Christ into the world, who is the cause of all happiness unto sinful man, was itself the effect of this purpose of God, to pardon and forgive sinners.

It is very difficult to trace out the order of the divine decrees concerning the salvation of mankind; and to pass from one of them to another, as they lie ranked and methodized in God's breast: and divers, that have attempted to search out these *Arcana Dei*, this art and mystery of justice and mercy, have trodden in paths different from one another; and, doubtless, many of them differing from the truth also. I shall not stand to draw a scheme of these decrees of God. Let it now suffice us to know, that God, from all eternity, foreseeing the sin and misery, which man would, by his permission and his own sin, involve himself in, did, for the manifestation of the riches both of his mercy and justice, enter into counsel, how to pardon and save him. This was the end of God's design, even to restore again to happiness some of mankind; even as many, as he should select out of the mass and common rubbish of sin and misery, and set apart for himself. But how shall this end be accomplished and brought about? Justice brandisheth its sword in the face of sinners; and demandeth as great a share of glory in punishment, as mercy doth in pardoning: and God is resolved to glorify both of these attributes of his, in their several demands. This now put him upon ransacking of the deepest counsel that ever lodged in his heart, even of an adored Mediator; in whom Justice receives full satisfaction, and Mercy triumphs in a full pardon, and both are infinitely glorious. For this end, God sent down his Son from heaven to earth, to become a propitiation for us; and so,

through the shedding of his blood, to obtain remission and forgiveness of sins for us. God's Mercy and his Beloved Son could not rest together in his bosom: and, therefore, his purpose of pardoning sin was so efficacious, that, to make room for the displaying of his Mercy, he sends his own Son out of heaven, never to enter again there, till, by his merit and sufferings, he had procured remission of sins for all those that believe in him. Hence the Apostle, Rom. iii. 25, 26, tells us, that *God hath set forth* Christ *to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through* God's *forbearance.....that he might be just, and the justifier of* them that believe *in Jesus:* as if the Apostle had said, God could not be just, if he should justify sinners that deserve his wrath, unless he had sent forth Jesus Christ into the world to become a propitiation and sacrifice to his justice for their sins; for, having threatened in his unalterable word to inflict vengeance upon all that are guilty, his truth obliged him to this dreadful severity upon all, since all are guilty: but Christ, taking on him the guilt of sinners, by his undergoing the wrath of God and the curse of the Law hath so fully appeased divine justice, that now God, though he doth not punish sinners in themselves, can yet be just and the justifier of sinners: therefore, he sent forth Christ to be a propitiation. God's eternal purpose, to glorify his justice in the punishing of sin, and yet to glorify his grace and mercy in pardoning sinners, wrought this great effect of sending Christ into the world, whereby two such different ends might with infinite wisdom be accomplished. So that Christ, who is the cause of all our happiness and mercy, is yet himself the effect of God's purpose and intent to pardon sin. And what can be said more to advance the greatness of this mercy? a mercy so great, that one of the Fathers, St. Gregory by name, doubted whether it were more misery or happiness, that Adam fell; since his sin and fall occasioned such a wonderful Redeemer, and such a glorious salvation: *Fælix culpa*, says he, "O happy fall, that obtained such a Redeemer!"

(2) Another blessed effect of God's purpose in pardoning sin, is the great gift of Faith.

Indeed, to give Jesus Christ were utterly in vain, did not God withal give faith to accept him. To tender Christ to an unbeliever, is to offer a gift where there is no hand to receive it. Hence, that God's purpose of giving pardon might stand valid, that the death of Christ might not be fruitless, and that his blood might not be like water spilt on the ground that cannot be gathered up again, God decreed to bestow faith upon them that believe, that may con-

vey to them the benefits of Christ's merits in their pardon and remission.

These two blessed effects follow in God's purpose and intention of pardoning sin; even the Gift of Christ to procure, and the Gift of Faith to apply, pardon unto the soul.

2. And, more especially, let us consider Pardon of Sin *in its Temporal and Real Application.*

And so the happy effects of it are manifold. I shall only instance in some, at present.

(1) Pardon of Sin gives an inviolable security against the pursuits of avenging justice.

This is its formal, and most immediate effect. Justice follows guilty sinners close at the heels, and shakes its flaming sword over their heads: every threatening contained in this Book of God, stands ready charged against them; and their sins make them so fair a mark, that they cannot be missed. Hence is that sad complaint of Job, *Why hast thou set me* up *as a mark?* into which he emptied his arrows as into his reins: Job vii. 20. Now while justice is driving the sinner before it from plague to plague, resolving never to stop till he hath driven him into hell, the great assembly and meeting of all plagues; mercy interposes, and lays its arrest upon it: and this gracious Act of Pardon rescues us, though under the hands of the executioner, and ready to be turned into hell. Here, the challenge, that justice makes to us, ceaseth; and we are left to walk safely, under the protection of mercy: for, when God issues out a pardon, he calls off justice from its pursuit. Thus you have the Psalmist thankfully acknowledging, Ps. lxxxv. 2; *Thou hast forgiven* our iniquities; and what follows; *Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger.* Nor is it to be feared, O soul, that thou shalt ever more be questioned for those sins that are once forgiven thee: God's acts of oblivion can never be repealed: no; God sets an everlasting sanction upon them, and justice shall never again molest thee: Jer. xxxi. 34; *I will forgive their* iniquities, *and I will remember their* sins *no more.* And, indeed, well may divine justice cease its pursuit of the guilty sinner; for, always, when God pardons a sinner, he turns his pursuit after Christ, and satisfies all his just demands upon him: for, though we are the principals in the debt, yet our Surety, who stands bound for us in the Covenant of Redemption, is far the more able and absolving person. Now is not this an unspeakable mercy, that justice and vengeance, the heavy strokes of which many thousand wretches lie under, and which thy sins have provoked and armed against thy own soul;

that might, every sin thou committest, that is every moment of thy life, strike thee dead in the place; in the dread of which, if thou hast any tenderness of conscience left in thee, thou must needs live in continual fearful expectations of this wrath of God, to destroy thee as his enemy; is it not infinite mercy, that God should call in the commission given to his justice, that mercy might secure thee from it? What is this, but the effect of pardoning grace, that gives this destroyer charge to pass over all those, upon whose consciences the blood of Christ is sprinkled for the removal of their guilt?

(2) Another blessed effect of Pardon of Sin, is Peace and Reconciliation with God.

And what happiness can be greater, than when the quarrel betwixt heaven and earth, betwixt God and the sinner, is taken up and compounded? Open wars have long been proclaimed, and long maintained on either part: ever since the first great rebellion, man hath stood in defiance with, and exercised great hostility against his Creator; and God, on the other hand, hath thundered out whole peals of curses against these rebels, and hath slain whole generations of them eternally dead upon the place. God hath still maintained his cause with victory, and man his with obstinacy, and this war would never cease, did not God proclaim pardon and forgiveness to all that will lay down their arms and submit.

Now, hereupon, peace is concluded fully: for,

[1] God's pardoning of sinners manifests him to be fully reconciled to them.

So the Apostle tells us, Rom. v. 1, *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.* God is a sworn enemy to all guilty sinners. Himself hath affixed this title to the rest of his name, that he *will by no means clear the guilty.* Guilt hath a malign influence: not only on our consciences, to discompose them with terrors and affrightments; but on God's contenance also, to ruffle into frowns and displeasure. Now when God pardons sin, he wipes away this overcasting cloud: and, the cause of enmity being removed, his face and favour clear up to us. And, then,

[2] Pardon of Sin is a strong inducement to us, to lay down the weapons of our warfare, and be at peace with God.

What argument can be more prevailing, where there is any principle of ingenuity? "When God thus proclaims peace, shall I continue war? He, pardons, and shall I rebel? He is reconciled, and shall I be implacable? Shall I persist in those sins, which he forgives? No: far be it from me. I submit to that God, whose rich

grace conquers by condescending, as well as his power by crushing." And thus the soul lays down its weapons at the feet of God; and humbly embraces the terms of agreement propounded by him in the Gospel.

(3) Pardon of Sin lays a good foundation for the soul's near acquaintance and commuuion with God.

Guilt is the only thing, that breeds alienation. *Your iniquities,* says the Prophet, *have separated between you and your God:* Isa. lix. 2. Nor, indeed, is it possible, that a guilty sinner should any more delight in conversing with God, than a guilty malefactor delights in the presence of his judge. And, therefore, we see, when Adam had contracted guilt upon himself by eating the forbidden fruit how childishly and foolishly he behaved himself! God calls him, and he runs behind a tree to hide himself? What a sudden change was here! Adam, who but a little before was his Creator's familiar, now dreads and shuns him: his guilt makes him apprehend God's call, to be no other than a summons to the bar. Nor, indeed, can it be otherwise, but that guilt should produce alienation betwixt God and the soul; for look how distance grows between two familiar friends, so doth it here: if a man be conscious to himself, that he hath done his friend an injury; what influence hath this upon him? why, presently it makes him more shy and reserved to him than before: so is it here: consciousness of guilt fills us with a troublesome, ill-natured shame: we are ashamed to look God in the face, whom we have so much wronged by our sin; and this shame is always joined with a slavish and base fear of God, lest he should revenge himself upon us, for the injuries that we have done to him; and both this shame and fear take off from that holy freedom and boldness, which reverently to use towards God, is the gust and spirit of our communion and fellowship with him; and all these lessen that sweet delight in God, that formerly we relished in the intimacy of this heavenly fellowship. And what can be the final product of all this, but a most sad alienation and estrangement between God and the soul? But Pardon of Sin removeth these obstructions; and causeth the intercourse betwixt God and the soul to pass free, because it gives the soul a holy and yet awful boldness in conversing with the great and terrible majesty of God. So much sense of pardon and reconciliation as we have, so much boldness shall we have ordinarily in our addresses to God; what is the reason that the consciences of wicked men drag them before God; and they come with so much diffidence, dejectedness, and jealousy? it is, because they are conscious to themselves of guilt that lies upon them;

and this makes them look on God, rather under the notion of a judge, than of a friend or father; and this makes them perform their duties so distrustfully, as if they would not have God take any notice that they were in his presence. But, when a pardoned sinner makes his addresses to God, he may do it with a holy freedom: the face of his soul looks cheerfully, and he treats with God with an open heart. What ground is there now, for such confidence as this is? for poor, vile dust and ashes, to appear thus before the Great God of Heaven and Earth?—Guilt is removed: peace is made in the blood of Christ: all enmity is abolished: all quarrels are decided: and it becomes not him, to serve God with such suspiciousness as guilty sinners do. Hence we have that expression of the Apostle, Heb. x. 22, *Let us draw near* to him....*in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience;* that is, from a guilty and an accusing conscience: now when the heart and conscience are sprinkled with the blood of Christ, whereby this guilt is taken off, then hath a man good ground to draw near to God, *in full assurance of faith.*

(4) Pardon of Sin lays a good ground for peace, in a man's own conscience.

I do not say, that Peace of Conscience is always an inseparable attendant upon Pardon of Sin; for, doubtless, there are many so unhappy, as to have a wrangling conscience in their own bosoms, when God is at peace with them: but this is certain, that Pardon of Sin lays a solid ground and foundation for Peace in a man's own Conscience; and, were Christians but as industrious as they should be in clearing up their evidences for heaven, they might obtain peace whenever they are pardoned. What is there, that disquiets conscience, but only guilt? nothing, but the guilt of sin, doth it: this is that, which rageth and stormeth in wicked men, and is as a tempest within their breasts: this is that unseen scourge, that draws blood and groans at every lash: this is that worm, that lies perpetually gnawing at the heart of a sinner: this is that rack, that breaks the bones, and disjoints the soul itself. In a word, guilt is the fuel of hell, and the incendiary of conscience: were it not for guilt, there were not a more pleasant and peaceable thing in all the world, than a man's own conscience. Now Pardon of Sin removes this guilt; and, thereby, makes reconciliation between us and our consciences: and, therefore, says our Saviour, Matt. ix. 2, to the paralytic man, *Son, be of good cheer; thy sins* are *forgiven thee.* Might not some say, "This is an impertinent speech, to say to one that was brought to be cured of a sad infirmity of body, that his sins were

forgiven him, whilst yet his disease was not cured?" No: our Lord Christ knew, that there was infinitely more cause of joy and cheerfulness to have sin pardoned, than to have diseases cured: to have all calm and serene within, not to have a frown or wrinkle upon the face of the soul, to have all smooth thoughts and peaceful affections; this is some faint resemblance of heaven itself, and is never vouchsafed unto any but where pardon and the sense of it are given to the soul.

(5) He, whose sins are pardoned, may rest assured, that whatever calamities or afflictions he may lie under, yet there is nothing in them of a curse or punishment.

It is guilt alone, that diffuseth poison through the veins, as of all our enjoyments so of all afflictions also, and turns them all into curses: but Pardon of Sin takes away this venom, and makes them all to be medicinal corrections; good, profitable, and advantageous to the soul. See how God, by the Prophet, expresseth this: Is. xxxiii. 24; *The* inhabitants *shall not say* they are *sick:* why so? for *the people, that dwell therein, shall be forgiven their* iniquities. When sin is pardoned, outward afflictions are not worth complaining of: the inhabitants shall not say, we are sick. A disease then becomes a medicine, when pardon hath taken away the curse and punishment of it.

God hath two ends with respect to himself, for which he brings punishment upon us: the one, is the manifestation of his holiness; the other, is for the satisfaction of his justice. And, accordingly as any affliction tends to either of these ends, so is it properly a punishment, or barely a fatherly chastisement. If God intend, by the afflictions which he lays upon thee, the satisfaction of his justice; then, thy afflictions are properly punishments, and they flow from the curse of the Law: but, if the manifestation of his holiness be all he intends by them; then, are they only fatherly corrections, proceeding from love and mercy.

[1] Those, whose sins God hath pardoned, he may afflict for the declaration of his holiness; that they may see and know what a holy God they have to deal with: who, so perfectly hates sin, that he will follow it with chastisements, even upon those, whom his free grace hath pardoned.

[2] God inflicts no chastisements upon those, whom he hath pardoned, for the satisfaction of his justice: and, therefore, they are not curses, not properly punishments; but only corrections and fatherly chastisements. Christ hath satisfied the demands of justice for their sins; and God is more just, than to exact double satisfaction

for the same offence, one in Christ's punishment, and another in theirs. The Apostle tells us, Gal. iii. 13; *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us.* It is not the evils that we suffer, that makes them curses or punishments though never so great; but only the ordination of these evils to the satisfaction of divine justice upon us. And, therefore, Christ, in Scripture, is said to be made a curse; not simply because he suffered: but because he was adjudged to his sufferings, that thereby satisfaction might be made unto the justice of God.

Hence, therefore, with what calmness and peace may a Pardoned Sinner look upon any afflictions! Though they are sore and heavy, though they seem to carry much of God's anger in them; yet there is nothing of a curse, or of the nature of a punishment: the sting was all of it received into the body of Christ; and now God's righteousness will not suffer him to punish them again in their own persons, whom he hath already punished in their Surety. Imagine what affliction thou canst. Art thou pinched with want and poverty? Dost thou sustain losses in thy estate, in thy relations? Art thou tormented with pains, weakened by diseases; and will all these bring death upon thee, at the last? Yet, O soul, if thy sins are pardoned, here is nothing of a curse or punishment in all this: justice is already satisfied, by Christ's bearing the curse of the Law for thee. Come what will come, it shall not hurt thee. Afflictions are all weak and weaponless: they are only the corrections of a loving Father, for the manifestation of his holiness, and for thy eternal gain and advantage.

Very sad is the condition of Guilty Sinners: for, whether they know it or not, there is not the least affliction, not the least gripe or pain, not the least slight or inconsiderable cross, but it is a punishment inflicted by God upon them, for the guilt of their sins. God is now beginning to satisfy his justice, and these are sent by him to arrest and seize on them: he now begins to take them by the throat; and calls upon them to pay him what they owe him. Every affliction to them is part of payment, and is exacted from them as part of payment. Oh, the vast and infinite sums of plagues, that God will most severely exact from them in hell, where they shall pay to the utmost farthing! There is not the least calamity, that befals wicked and unpardoned sinners, but carries the venom of a curse in it; and inflicted by God upon them, in order to the satisfaction of his justice on them: which complete satisfaction he will work out upon them in their complete torments in hell.

So much for this time and text.

# THE DOCTRINE OF THE TWO COVENANTS:

## WHEREIN THE NATURE OF ORIGINAL SIN IS AT LARGE EXPLAINED; AND ST. PAUL AND ST. JAMES RECONCILED, IN THE GREAT ARTICLE OF JUSTIFICATION.

### INTRODUCTION.

*For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise: Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.* ROM. x. 5—9.

OF all the mysterious depths in Christian Religion, there is none, more necessary for our information nor more influential upon our practice, than a right apprehension and a distinct knowledge of the Doctrine of the Covenants. For, if we be ignorant or mistaken in this, we must needs be liable to false or confused notions of the Law and the Gospel; of our Fall in Adam, and Restoration by Christ; of the true grounds of men's Condemnation, and the means and terms of their Justification; of the Justice of God in punishing sinners, and his glorious Mercy in saving believers: and, consequently, neither can many perplexing doubts and questions be resolved, the necessity and yet different concurrence of faith and obedience unto salvation cleared, the utter insufficiency of our own righteousness to procure acceptance for us with God evinced, his justice vindicated, nor his grace glorified. For all these great and important truths will readily own themselves to be built upon the foundation of God's covenant and stipulation with man; as I hope to make appear in our farther progress.

And yet, though this doctrine be thus generally serviceable both to knowledge and practice, how many are there, who call themselves Christians, that are grossly ignorant of these transactions between God and man! that know not upon what terms they stand with the Almighty; nor what they may expect, according to the tenor of their mutual compact and agreement!

This, therefore, I shall endeavour to treat of, as briefly and as clearly as the subject will permit, from the words which I have now read unto you; which are the transcript and copy of those Two great Contracts made between Heaven and Earth, God and Man: the one, from the beginning of his being, and that is the Covenant of Works; the other, immediately upon his fall and ruin, and that is the Covenant of Grace: the one, called here the Righteousness of the Law; and the other, the Righteousness of Faith.

But, before I can particularly treat on this subject, I must first show you what a Covenant is, in its general notion; and whether there is or can be any such thing as a proper covenant, between God and Man.

Our English word Covenant seems to be borrowed from the Latin *convenire* or *conventus;* which signifies a mutual agreement and accord, upon conditions propounded and accepted by the parties concerned. And it may be thus described: A covenant is a mutual consent and agreement entered into between persons, whereby they stand bound each to other to perform the conditions contracted and indented for. And thus a covenant is the very same thing with a contract or bargain.

Now to a strict and proper covenant there are two things presupposed.

First. That, in the persons contracting, there be a natural liberty and freedom the one from the other: that is, that the one be not bound to the other as to the things covenanted for, antecedently to that compact or agreement made between them.

For where an obligation to a duty is natural, there it cannot be strictly and properly federal, or arising from a covenant. If children should indent with their parents to yield them obedience upon condition that they on their part will afford them fit and convenient provision, this cannot, in strict sense, be called a covenant; because neither of the parties were free from the obligation of a natural law, which obliged them antecedently to this compact. In a proper covenant, the things promised by each party must be due, only upon consent and agreement: so that there must be an equality of the persons covenanting, if not in other respects, yet in respect of that for which they do covenant, that the right of both in what they mutually promise be equal. If one man covenant with another to serve him faithfully upon condition of such a reward and wages, though there may be much disparity upon other accounts between them, yet, as to the things covenanted for, there is none: the one having as much right to the wages, as the other to

the service; and neither having right to either before the agreement.

Secondly. In a proper covenant, there must be mutual consent of the persons covenanting.

And this is called a stipulation, whereby each party doth freely and voluntarily engage himself to the other for his own particular benefit and advantage. For where both are free and disobliged, it is generally the apprehension of some good that will accrue unto them, that brings them to enter into a federal engagement.

Now this being plainly the nature of a covenant, it clearly follows, that there neither is nor can be a strict and proper covenant between God and Man. For,

First. Both parties covenanting are not naturally free the one from the other.

God is, indeed, naturally and originally free, and hath no obligation to man antecedent to his own gracious will and promise. But Man hath a double bond to duty: both his natural obligation, as he is a creature; and his federal, as he is a covenanter: and therefore he is bound to obedience, not only by his stipulation and engagement, but also upon that natural relation wherein he stands to God as his Creator, and which alone would have been a sufficient obligation upon him had he never entered into covenant. And,

Secondly. The creature's consent and agreement is not necessary to the covenant which God makes with it.

And that, because the terms of it being so infinitely to our advantage, as there can be no reason imagined why we should dissent; so neither is there any to expect an explicit consent for the ratification of it. Neither are we lords of ourselves; but he, that made us, may impose on us what laws he pleaseth: and, if he condescend to encourage us by promises of reward, this voluntary obligation, which God is pleased to lay upon himself, lays a farther obligation upon us to do what he requires out of love and thankfulness, faith and hope, whereby we cheerfully expect and embrace what he hath promised: which, likewise, of itself, is so vastly transcendant and disproportionate to all our performances, that it cannot be our due, upon a strict and proper covenant (for, in every such bargain, the *datum* and *acceptum*, that which is promised by both parties, must be alike valuable, at least in the esteem of the covenanters;) but rather a free beneficence, upon an arbitrary promise.

So that, between Man and Man, a covenant is a mutual and an

equal obligation: but, between God and Man, it is only a mutual obligation; on God's part to a free performance of his promises, and on man's part to a cheerful performance of his duty: wherein, as there is no equality, either in right or value; so neither is there any necessity, that man should give an explicit and formal consent thereto.

And, as God's transactions with us are not strictly and properly a Covenant, so neither are they strictly and properly a Law; although they are often called the Law of Works, and the Law of Faith. For God doth not deal with us merely out of absolute sovereignty, but he is graciously pleased to oblige himself to us by promise; which doth not belong to a sovereign acting as such, but carries some resemblance of a covenant. So that the agreement, which God hath made with man is not merely a covenant, nor merely a law; but mixed of both. If God had only said *Do this*, without adding *Thou shalt live;* this had not been a Covenant, but a Law: and, if he had only said *Thou shalt live*, without commanding *Do this:* it had not been a Covenant, but a Promise. Remove the condition, and you make it a simple promise: remove the promise, and you make it an absolute law: but, both these being found in it, it is both a law and a covenant; though both, in a large acceptation.

And thus you see what a covenant is; and how the transactions between God and man may be said to be a covenant; and wherein they differ from the proper notion of one.

Yet the difference is not so great, but that the Scripture most frequently makes mention of covenants ratified between God and Man, and chiefly insists upon the two principal ones, which indeed are the argument and substance of the whole Bible, the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace; in which not only particular persons were engaged, but the whole race of mankind: the summary contents of which were, *Do this, and live;* and *Believe, and live.* The former is the tenor of the Covenant of Works; the latter, the tenor of the Covenant of Grace. And both these are expressed in my text: the Covenant of Works is called the Righteousness of the Law; that is, the rule of Righteousness by the Law, the sentence of which is, that *the man, which doeth those things, shall live by them:* the Covenant of Grace is called *the righteousness, which is of faith;* that is, the rule of obtaining Righteousness by Faith, the purport of which is this, that if thou shalt believe on the Lord Jesus, whom God hath raised from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

## PRELIMINARY REMARKS ON LAW AND RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Now, here, before I can treat of the substance of these Two Covenants, it will be requisite to explain to you,

What is meant by the LAW. And, what by RIGHTEOUSNESS.

I. To the first I answer, that the LAW is taken very variously in Scripture; but, most commonly, by it is meant the whole sum of those commands, which Moses, from the mouth of God, delivered to the Israelites; containing that, which we commonly call the Moral, Judicial, and Ceremonial Law.

But, certainly, in this place, it cannot be taken in that latitude: for the Judicial and Ceremonial Law were not branches of that Covenant of Works, which God entered into with Adam; nor are any guilty for not observing them, except the Jews to whom they were particularly delivered.

This Law, therefore, which, according to the Covenant of Works, must be punctually fulfilled in order to our obtaining Justification by it, is the Moral Law; the law and dictates of pure and uncorrupted nature. And this Law of Nature is no other but a bright and shining impression of divine light upon the soul: a kind of parely and reflection of the immutable, unsearchable, and eternal law of God's holiness: a communication of divine attributes unto us; whereby, in our first moulding, we were stamped after the similitude of God, and are said to bear his image.

Of this Moral Law, God hath given the world two draughts: the one archetypal, being the fair strictures of his own likeness, in our first creation; the other ectypal, in the Decalogue, wherein he hath in Ten Words limned out what man's nature was when it was perfect, and what it ought to be that it may be perfect. So that, for the matter and substance of them, there is no difference at all between the original law of man's first creation, the law of pure reason and uncorrupted nature, and the transcript thereof in the Moral Law delivered by Moses.

And, therefore, as the Law of his Creation was to Adam a Covenant of Works, so the Moral Law, being for the matter of it the very same, must also be acknowledged to be the matter and substance of the Covenant of Works. The same commands of both tables, which bind us to obedience, bound Adam himself, so far forth as his condition in Paradise was capable of an actual obligation by them: for parents, he had none, to honour; neighbours and servants, he had none, to receive the offices of justice and charity. But, had he continued in his first estate till these relations had sprung up about him, the same commands, from the innate

principle of his reason, would have bound him to his respective duties towards them, as do now bind us.

And this may be farther discerned, even by those obscure prints of the law of nature which yet remain upon the hearts of Heathens; who, though they *have not the Law*, yet, saith the Apostle, they *do by nature the things contained in the Law*, i. e. in the Moral Law: Rom. ii. 14. As, when Moses brake the two tables of stone, yet something of the commandments was still left engraven by the finger of God upon the shattered pieces of them; so, when man fell and brake that goodly frame of his nature, yet still some remains and parcels of the same law, written there likewise by the finger of God, may be observed still to continue upon it.

So that, between the Law of pure Nature and the Moral Law, there is as much agreement as between an indenture and its counterpart. And, therefore, if the Law of Nature were to Adam a Covenant of Works, as doubtless it was, the Moral Law, being for the matter of it the same, must likewise for the matter of it be the same Covenant.

Now the Moral Law may be considered by us either as a Covenant of Works, or as a Rule of Life. In the former respect, it is superseded to all believers by the mercy and grace of the Gospel: in the latter, it is explained, corroborated, and protected by the Gospel; and though it be no longer the measure of God's proceedings towards us, yet still it is the measure of our duty towards him.

And, here, if a profitable digression may be allowed, give me leave to show you the Agreement and Difference that there is, between the Law and the Gospel. For, since they are vulgarly thought such opposite things, it will not, perhaps, be impertinent, to state and fix the limits, both of their opposition and concord.

When we speak of the Law and the Gospel, the words are very equivocal; and may cause many mistakes and errors in ignorant and confused minds. For,

i. By the LAW, three things may be understood.

1. The Law, as *a Covenant of Works.*

And, then, as hath been already noted, it must be taken for the sum and substance of the Moral Law, as originally imprinted in our natures.

2. By Law, may be meant *the Moral Law, as it is the Rule for our Duty and Obedience.*

And so we understand it, when we commonly say, the Law commands this or that to be done, or this and that to be avoided.

3. By the Law, may be meant *Legal Administrations and Ceremo-*

*nies*, which, under the pædagogy of Moses, were a great part of the Jewish worship.

And thus we call their sacrifices, purifyings, ways of atonement, and other typical rites, Legal Observances.

ii. So, likewise, when we speak of the GOSPEL, two things may be meant by it.

1. *Gospel Grace, purchased for lost mankind by Jesus Christ:* both relative grace, for the change of our state, in pardon, justification, adoption, &c., and real grace, for the change of our natures, in sanctification and renovation.

And thus we use to say, that the first Gospel, that ever was preached in the world, was to Adam, presently after his Fall, by God himself: Gen. iii. 15. The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head: for this was the first discovery of grace and mercy, through Jesus Christ. Yea, and the promise made to Abraham many ages before the coming of Christ into the world, is by the Apostle called the preaching of the Gospel: Gal. iii. 8; God, saith the Apostle, *preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.*

2. By Gospel, is sometimes meant *the Gospel Administration of this Grace*, dispensed to the world by Christ himself and his ministers, in a more free and open way, than the shadows under the Law did exhibit it.

iii. Now, according to these various acceptations of the Law and Gospel, we may observe a TWOFOLD DIFFERENCE and a TWOFOLD AGREEMENT between them.

1. Their *Difference is twofold.*

(1) If we understand by the Law a Covenant of Works, and by the Gospel the Grace and Mercy of the Gospel; so, they are extremely opposite and contrary one to the other.

For, take gospel grace for relative grace, such as whereby we are pardoned, reconciled, justified, and adopted; these could have no place at all under the Covenant of Works. Yea, if we take gospel grace for the real grace of sanctification and renovation, so as these terms do imply the making of an unclean thing holy, and an old thing new; it had not, neither could have, place under the Covenant of Works: because there was no uncleanness supposed to be done away, nor any thing old that should be renewed. For this covenant makes no allowances for transgression, nor any admission of repentance. Yet, indeed, the habits of grace, which now sanctify us, were also in Adam, whilst under this covenant: yea, and Christ also was the author of them; but with this difference, that to him

Christ was the author of them merely as Creator, but to us as Redeemer ; to him, only as God the Second Person, but to us as God-Man the Mediator.

(2) If, by the Law, we mean a Legal Administration under types and figures, such as were the sacrifices and ceremonies in use under the Jewish discipline; and, by the Gospel, that clear and unvailed way of dispensing the Means of Salvation since the coming of Christ into the world: so, again, they as much differ each from other, as shadows do from substance, or clouds from sunshine.

And thus may we understand that antithesis, John i. 17; *The Law given by Moses;* i. e. the ceremonial, shady Law: *but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ;* i. e. a clearer and more full manifestation of grace, and the very substance and truth of those things which were before typified and adumbrated.

These are the two differences between the Law and the Gospel; in both which, the Gospel takes place upon the abrogation of the Law: Gospel Grace hath abrogated the Law as a Covenant; and Gospel Dispensations have abrogated Legal Ceremonies.

2. Their *Agreement is,* likewise, *twofold.*

(1) If we take the Moral Law as it is the directive Rule of our Obedience, so there is a perfect harmony and accord between it and the Gospel.

For the duties of the Moral Law are as strictly required from believers since Christ's coming, as they were before: yea, as strictly as ever they were from Adam in innocence; though not upon the same terms from us, as from him. The Gospel is, in this respect, so far from weakening the Law, that it doth rather much strengthen and confirm it. What saith our Saviour, Matt. v. 17? I am not *come to destroy the Law, but to fulfil* it: And, the Apostle, Rom. iii. 31? *Do we then make void the Law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the Law.* The Gospel receives the Law into its protection and patronage: so that, to the obliging power, which it had before from the authority of God the great sovereign of the world, enacting it; hereby is added the farther sanction of Christ the Mediator, ratifying and confirming it; who likewise gives us of his Spirit, whereby we are enabled to act in conformity to the Law, and to fulfil its commands. The Law is, therefore, now taken within the pale of the Gospel, and incorporated into it: so that it is no longer Law and Gospel; but, rather, an Evangelical and Gospel Law.

(2) If, by Law, we mean the Legal Administrations of Ceremonies and Sacrifices, Types and Figures, used under the Mosaical Dis-

cipline; and if, by Gospel, we mean the Grace exhibited by it of Pardon, Justification, &c., so neither is there any opposition or repugnance between them, but a most perfect accord and agreement.

For, before Christ's coming into the world gospel grace was under a legal administration. When the sun is approaching us in the morning, though its body be under the horizon and in another hemisphere, yet then we see the dawning and glimmering of its light. So was it in the Church: though the Sun of Righteousness was not risen upon them with his full brightness, yet they then saw and enjoyed the dawn of our perfect day; and those Jews, who lived as it were in the other hemisphere of time before Christ's coming, were as much under grace as now we are, though not under such clear and glorious dispensations of it. We read, indeed, that the disciples were first called Christians some few years after our Saviour's death; but yet those saints, who lived many ages before his birth, were as truly Christians as they, though not known nor distinguished by that name. Yea, and I remember I have somewhere met with a passage of St. Ambrose:* *Prius cæpisse populum Christianum; quam populum Judæorum:* "There were Christian People in the world, before ever there was a Jewish Nation." They had then the same Christ to save them, the same promises to support them, the same faith to appropriate both unto them, as now we have. They were under as great an impossibility of obtaining life by the deeds of the Law, as we are; and we under as strict an injunction to fulfil the commands of the Law, as was ever on them imposed. The only difference between them and us consists in this, that they saw the Sun of Righteousness under a cloud; we, openly: they, by its reflection; we, directly.

And, thus much, for the opening of what is meant by the Law, in this text, which is the Moral Law, as a Covenant of Works.

II. The Second Preliminary was, to explain what was meant by RIGHTEOUSNESS. *Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the Law, &c.*

And, indeed, unless we have a clear notion of this, we can neither know for what ends the Covenants were made, nor wherein the nature of Justification doth consist: for, because we fulfil the covenant made with us by God, therefore are we righteous; and because we are righteous according to the terms of the covenant, therefore are we justified. So that a clear knowledge of this righteousness will be serviceable to the unfolding of both; since it is the end of the Covenant, and the matter of Justification.

* De Sacram. l. iv. c. 3.

This, therefore, I shall attempt, by giving, first, several Distinctions; and, then, several Theses or Positions, concerning Righteousness.

i. There is, therefore, a TWOFOLD RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Qualitative; or that, which may be understood as a Quality or Habit in us.

Relative or Legal; or that, which stands in Conformity to some Law.

1. A *Qualitative Righteousness* is nothing else, but the divine qualities of grace and holiness inherent in the soul.

Holiness and righteousness, to be gracious and to be righteous, in this sense signify one and the same thing.

Nothing doth more frequently occur in Scripture, than this use of the word. So Noah is called *righteous:* Gen. vii. 1; and Abraham pleads with God for the *righteous* in Sodom: Gen. xviii. 23, 24; and Zacharias and Elizabeth have this testimony, that *they were both righteous,* because they walked *in all the commandments.....of the Lord blameless:* Luke i. 6. The ways of holiness are called the ways of *righteousness:* Ps. xxiii. 3; and the works of holiness, works of *righteousness:* Ps. xv. 2, Isa. lxiv. 5; and 1 John iii. 7, *He, that doeth righteousness, is righteous.* Many other places there are, too numerous to be cited, wherein righteousness is taken both for the inherent principle of holiness, and for the gracious actions that proceed therefrom.

It is, indeed, improper to call our holiness, which is so imperfect and full of failings, by the name of righteousness. Nay, were it most perfect and consummate, yet it is not the same with righteousness strictly and properly taken: for righteousness, properly, is rather a denomination arising from the conformity of actions to their rule, than either the principle or substance of the actions themselves: for that is righteous, which is right; and that is right, which is agreeable to the rule by which it is to be measured. Even in Adam, whose holiness was perfect, yet was there this difference between it and his righteousness, at least in our clear conceptions, that his grace, as it was conformable to its pattern, viz., the purity of God, so it was his holiness; but as it stood in conformity to the law of God, so it was his righteousness. For, in strict propriety of speech, the rule of holiness is different from the rule of righteousness: holiness is measured by similitude to God; righteousness, by conformity to the Law: holiness may admit of degrees, and be more or less perfect in several subjects in whom it is implanted; but righteousness consists in an indivisible and unvariable point, for if it be less than a perfect conformity it is not righteousness, and more than perfect it cannot be.

Yet our defective and imperfect holiness may obtain the name of holiness: either because it flows from that principle, which, in its own nature, tends to a perfect conformity unto the Law; or, else, because it is a necessary and inseparable concomitant of a true and proper righteousness, though not our own, yet imputed.

2. There is a *Legal* or *Relative Righteousness:* and this a man is said to have, when the Law, by which he is to be judged, hath nothing whereof to accuse him.

Unto this righteousness there are required,

(1) A Law established for the regulating of our actions.

For as, where there is no Law, there can be no transgression; so, neither can there be any proper positive righteousness. And,

(2) There must be a perfect conformity unto this Law.

The Law is the straight rule, by which all our actions are to be measured: I mean the law of nature and right reason, enacted to all mankind; and the superadded law of divine revelation, to those who enjoy it. Now, it is a contradiction, to affirm that there can be a righteousness, where there is any obliquity in actions, compared to the rule and law, whereby they must be judged: for, in case of such obliquity and crookedness, the Law hath an advantage to lay in an accusation against the transgressor.

So, then, we may take a brief description of righteousness, properly so called, in these terms: Righteousness is a denomination, first of actions, and consequently of persons, arising from their perfect conformity to the Law whereby they must be judged. It must be first of actions, and then of the person; because the righteousness of the person results from the conformity of his actions. Nor will it suffice that some of his actions be thus conformable to the Law, but every action that falls under its cognizance must be conformed unto it, or else the person can by no means be accounted righteous.

This perfect conformity being thus absolutely necessary to constitute a person righteous, and yet as absolutely impossible to us in this our lapsed state, it might therefore seem to be alike impossible, that ever we should obtain a righteousness, that might avail to our justification.

ii. And, therefore, for the clearer apprehension of the nature of righteousness, and the manner how we are denominated righteous which indeed is the very critical point in the doctrine of Justification, these following DISTINCTIONS, if duly pondered, will be very serviceable.

The Law consists of Two Parts.

First. The Precept, requiring obedience: *Do this.*

Secondly. The Sanction of this precept, by rewards and punishments: *The man, that doeth these things, shall live by them,* is the reward promised unto obedience; and, *The soul, that sinneth, it shall die,* is the punishment threatened against disobedience.

Now according to these two parts of the Law, so there are two ways of becoming righteous by the Law; so that it shall have nothing to lay to our charge. The one is, by obedience to the precept: the other is, by submission to the penalty: not only he, who performs what the Law commands, is thereby righteous; but he also, who hath suffered what the Law threatens.

From hence we may again distinguish righteousness, into a Righteousness of Obedience, and a Righteousness of Satisfaction: the former ariseth from performing the Precept of the Law; the latter, from undergoing the Penalty. Between these two righteousnesses this remarkable difference may be observed, that the promise of life being annexed to the fulfilling of the precept, the righteousness of obedience gives a full right and title unto the life promised: but no such right results from the righteousness of satisfaction; for it is not said in the Law, "Suffer this, and live," since the suffering itself was death, but *Do this, and live.* So that, by mere satisfaction, a man is not accounted the fulfiller of the Law; nor yet farther to be dealt withal, as a transgressor of it. Hence, then, the one may be called a Positive Righteousness, because it ariseth from actual and positive conformity of our obedience to the rules of the Law: the other, only Negative Righteousness, because satisfaction is equivalent to innocency, and reduceth the person to a guiltless condition; which I here call a Negative Righteousness.

Now each of these, both the Righteousness of Obedience and that of Satisfaction, may again be twofold; either Personal, or Imputed. I call that Personal Righteousness, which a man in his own person works out, whether it be of obedience to the commands of the Law, or of satisfaction to the penalty thereof. Imputed Righteousness is a righteousness wrought out by another, yet graciously, by the Lawgiver himself, made ours; and so accounted as effectual to all intents of the Law, as if we had in our own persons performed it.

iii. These Distinctions being thus premised, I shall now proceed to lay down some POSITIONS, which may farther clear up this subject to our apprehensions.

1. *If we could perfectly fulfil the Preceptive part of the Law, we should thereby obtain a perfect Righteousness of Obedience; and might lay claim to eternal life, by virtue of the promise annexed to the Covenant of Works.*

This is most unquestionably true; especially if we suppose this perfect obedience by our own natural strength, without the assistance of divine and supernatural grace: because such an ability would infer the primitive integrity of our nature, and exclude the guilt of original sin, which hath involved all in the curse and malediction of the Law.

2. *If we could undergo the whole of that Punishment which the Law threatens for disobedience, then also should we be accounted personally righteous by a Righteousness of Satisfaction.*

If an offender against a human law suffers the penalty which the law requires to be inflicted on him, according to the nature of his offence, whether it be imprisonment, a pecuniary mulct, or the like, that man thereby becomes negatively righteous, because the law is satisfied, so that it hath nothing farther to charge against him for that particular fact. Thus stands the case in reference to the Law of God. The transgressing of the command binds us over to suffer punishment; which suffering if we can accomplish, and come from under, we shall be as righteous in the sight of God, as if we had never transgressed.

3. *Because the punishment threatened by the Law of Works is such, as can never be eluctated, nor fully and completely borne by us; therefore, it is utterly impossible, that ever we should obtain a personal righteousness of satisfaction.*

Indeed, could we suffer it and come from under it, we should then be as righteous and innocent, as if we had never transgressed. But this is utterly impossible. For,

(1) Infinite justice cannot be satisfied under the rate of infinite punishment. In a full satisfaction, the punishment must answer the greatness of the offence. But every offence against God hath an infinite heinousness in it, and therefore the punishment for it must be infinite. Crimes are greatened, not only from the nature of the action as it is in itself flagitious; but also from the quality and dignity of the person, against whom they are committed. Reviling and injurious speeches against a man's equal are but actionable; but, against the king, they are treasonable. A less offence against an excellent person, is more heinous than a greater against a more ignoble person. And, consequently, God being of Infinite Majesty and Perfection, every offence against him must needs be infinitely heinous; and therefore must be infinitely punished, before full satisfaction can be made for it.

(2) There are but two ways how a punishment can be imagined to be infinite. The one is intensively, when it is infinite in degrees:

the other is extensively, when it is infinite in duration and continuance, though but finite in degree. If the punishment be either of these ways infinite, it is fully satisfactory and commensurate to the divine justice, which is infinite. But,

(3) We cannot possibly suffer a punishment which is infinite in degrees, because we ourselves are but finite in our natures; and what is finite cannot contain what is infinite: yea, though God should stretch and widen our capacities to the utmost, yet we can never become vessels large enough to hold infinite wrath at once. Therefore,

(4) The punishment of sinners, because it cannot be infinite in degrees, that it may be satisfactory must be infinite in duration and continuance; that so a finite, yet immortal creature, as the soul of man is, may undergo a penalty some way infinite as is the justice offended.

(5) Because their punishment must be infinite in duration, therefore it is utterly impossible, that ever it should be completely borne and eluctated, since what is to last to all eternity can never be accomplished. And, therefore, it is impossible, that ever we should procure to ourselves a Righteousness of Satisfaction; as impossible as it is, to outlive eternity, or to find a period in what must continue for ever.

[1] But, it may be objected: "Is not God's justice satisfied in the punishment of the damned? why else doth he inflict it? And, if justice be satisfied in their damnation, how then can satisfaction be a righteousness equivalent to innocence, since they shall never be discharged from their torments?" To this I answer:

1st. That there shall never be any time, wherein the justice of God shall be so fully satisfied by the damned in hell, as to require no more sufferings from them: for they shall be making satisfaction to all eternity. The infinite justice of God is satisfied in this, that it shall be satisfying itself to all eternity: and yet, in all that eternity, there shall be no one moment, wherein the sinner shall be able to say it is finished, and justice is fully satisfied.

2dly. To this may be added, that the eternal succession of their torments is, in respect of God, a permanent instant, a fixed and abiding Now. So that the very infinity of their punishment in the everlasting continuance of it, is accounted by God (to whom *a thousand years*, yea thousands of millions of years, *are but as yesterday when it is past*) as now actually present and existing. For, in his essence, there is no variation; and, in his knowledge, objects have no succession, besides that of method and order.

[2] "But how then," may some say, "were the sufferings of

Christ satisfactory, since they were not infinite nor eternal?" I answer:

1st. That our Saviour Christ, being God as well as man, and so an Infinite Person, might well bear the load of infinite degrees of wrath at once laid upon him, and thereby complete his satisfaction. So that his sufferings might be intensively infinite, and yet not exceed the capacity of his nature.

Or, if any should scruple whether the punishment of Christ were infinite in degrees, yet,

2dly. We may affirm that the dignity of his person, being God as well as man, might compound for the measure of his sufferings, and shorten their duration. For it is infinite suffering for an infinite person to suffer, it being an infinite humiliation and abasement. However, that punishment, which is stretched out by the line of eternity when laid upon the damned, was all wound up together when inflicted on Christ. He, at one large draught, drank off the cup of that fury, which they everlastingly drain by little drops. And could they, as he did, bear and eluctate the whole punishment at once, they would thereby obtain a Righteousness of Satisfaction, and be proceeded with as innocent or negatively righteous.

That is the Third Position.

4. Another position shall be this: *Because we can neither fulfil the commands of the Law, nor yet undergo and eluctate the utmost extremity of the punishment; therefore, our righteousness cannot possibly be Inherent or Personal.*

We cannot be personally righteous by perfect Obedience, because of the corruptions of our natures: we cannot be personally righteous by full Satisfaction, because of the condition of our natures. Our corrupt state makes our perfect obedience a thing impossible; and our limited finite state makes our full satisfaction as impossible. As we are fallen sinners, so we lie under a sad necessity of transgressing the Law: as we are vile creatures, so we lie under an utter incapacity of recompensing divine justice. Well, therefore, might the Apostle cry out, *There is none righteous: no, not one:* Rom. iii. 10. As for a personal righteousness of obedience, the Prophet unfolds that goodly garment: Isa. lxiv. 6; *All our righteousnesses are* but *as filthy rags:* rags they are; and, therefore, cannot cover our nakedness: filthy rags they are; and, therefore, need a covering for themselves. To think to cover filth by filth, is nothing else, but to make both more odious in the sight of God.

Nor can we hope to appear before God upon a Righteousness of Satisfaction: for how should we satisfy his justice? Is it by Doing?

Whatsoever we can do, is, God's gift; our own duty, had we never sinned; and, can bear no proportion to the sin committed: for no duty is of infinite goodness; but every sin is of infinite heinousness, as hath been demonstrated; and therefore no duty can make satisfaction for it.

Is it by Suffering, that we hope we may satisfy God? Alas! this is nothing else, but to seek salvation by being damned: for that is the penal part of the Law; and the only personal satisfaction, that the justice of God will exact of sinners.

Now, though it be thus in vain to seek for a righteousness of our own, either of the one kind or of the other; yet that corruption of our natures, which is the only cause why we have not a personal righteousness of obedience, still prompts us insensibly to trust to it: and ready we are, upon all occasions, to be drawing up an inventory of our good works, as the merit of our justification; which, if they be really found, are but good evidences of it. For,

5. *The righteousness, which alone can justify us, must be a Righteousness either of Obedience or Satisfaction; either doing what the Law hath required, or suffering what it threatens: and, indeed, both are necessary to bring us to heaven and happiness, in a way of Justification.*

Perhaps God might, by the absolute prerogative of his mercy, have pardoned and saved sinners, without requiring any Righteousness or Satisfaction. But I say, that it is utterly impossible and contradictious, that he should justify any without a righteousness; for the very notion of Justification doth essentially connote and infer a righteousness, since it is God's owning and dealing with men as righteous. For ought I know, God might, had he so pleased, have pardoned and saved us without any righteousness; but, certain I am, he could not justify us without it. Now that is no righteousness, which doth not fully answer the law which is the rule of it: for the least defect destroys its nature, and turns it into unrighteousness.

If it be here objected, that the Rule of our Righteousness is not the Law of Works, but the Law of Faith: that the Covenant of Works is abolished, and that of Grace succeeds in the place thereof, which requires faith, repentance, and sincere obedience as the conditions of our justification; and that these are now the Righteousness by which we are justified: I answer, by laying down

6. A sixth position: *That the Covenant of Works is only so far forth repealed and abrogated, as it did require a Personal Righteousness to our Justification; but it is not repealed, as it did require a Perfect Righteousness.*

God did never so far disannul the Covenant of Works, that, whether or no his Law were obeyed or his Justice satisfied, yet we should be accounted righteous: but, it is only thus far repealed by the Covenant of Grace, that, though we cannot perfectly obey nor fully satisfy in our own persons, yet we may be pardoned and accepted through the satisfaction and obedience of our Surety. So that, even now, under the Covenant of Grace, no righteousness can avail to our Justification, but what, for the matter of it, is perfectly conformable to the Law of Works. And, when we say that the Covenant of Works is abrogated, and that we are not to expect Justification according to the covenant, the meaning is not, that the matter of that covenant is repealed, but only the personal obligation relaxed: for, still, it is the righteousness of the Law which justifies us, though performed by another. And, therefore, in this sense, whosoever are justified, it is according to the Covenant of Works: that is, it is by that righteousness, which, for the substance and matter of it, this covenant did require.

For the proof of this, which is of very great moment for the clearing the doctrine of Justification, consider,

(1) That there can be no sufficient reason given why our Saviour should suffer the penalty, who never transgressed the precepts of the Law, unless it be that his sufferings might be our satisfaction.

Consequently, if Christ died for us, only to satisfy divine justice in our stead, and as our Surety, it must necessarily follow, that this his death is our Righteousness of Satisfaction according to the Law and Covenant of Works.

(2) That Law, according to the letter of which the far greater part of the world shall be judged, cannot be an abrogated, a repealed law.

But, though true believers shall indeed be judged only according to the favourable construction of the Law of Works, which is the accepting the righteousness of their Surety for their own; yet all the rest of the world (and how vast a number is it!) shall be judged according to the strict letter of the Covenant of Works, and must either stand or fall according to the sentence of it: they must either produce a perfect sinless righteousness, wrought out personally by themselves; or else suffer the vengeance of eternal death. Indeed, all men, at the Last Day, shall be judged by the Covenant of Works: and, when they shall stand before the tribunal of God, this Law will be then produced, and every man's title tried by it; and whoever cannot plead a righteousness conformable to the tenor and import of it, must expect nothing else but the execution of the

punishment threatened. The righteousness of Christ will be the believer's plea; and accepted, because it fully answers the matter of the Law. The rest of the world can produce no righteousness of their own, *for all have sinned;* nor can they plead this of Christ, because they have no faith, which alone can give this title and convey it to them: so that their case is desperate, their doom certain, and their punishment remediless and insupportable; and this, according to the tenor of the Covenant of Works, *Do this* or *Suffer this,* by which God will proceed in judging of the world. Consider, again,

(3) That the matter and substance of the Covenant of Works is nothing else but the Moral Law (as I showed before) the law of holiness and obedience: the obligation of which continues still upon us: and the least transgression of which is threatened with death and condemnation

"What, then, doth God speak contradictions? and, in the Law of Works, tell us he will punish every transgressor; and, in the Law of Faith, tell he will not punish every transgressor?" No, certainly: his truth and his justice are immutable; and, what he hath once spoken with his mouth, he will fulfil with his hand. And his veracity is obliged to punish every offender; for God can be no more false in his threatenings, than in his promises; and, therefore, he punisheth those whom he pardons, or else he could not pardon. He pardons their Persons, according to his Covenant of Grace; he punisheth their Surety, according to his Covenant of Works: which, in a forsenic sense, being the punishing of them, they have in him made a satisfaction to the justice of God, and thereby have obtained a righteousness according to the the terms of the Covenant of Works.

I have the longer insisted on this Sixth Position, because it is the very critical point of the doctrine of Justification, and the very hinge upon which all the controversies concerning it do turn.

7. Another position shall be this: *That, though we have no Personal Righteousness, yet our Saviour Christ hath a Personal Righteousness of both kinds, both of perfect Obedience to the commands of the Law, and of full Satisfaction to the penalty threatened in it.*

(1) Christ hath wrought out a Righteousness of perfect Obedience; and that, by his absolute conformity to a Twofold Law.

(1) The Law Natural, under the obligation of which he lay as a man.

For both the First and Second Adam were made under the same Law of Works: the First, under the mutability of his own will

which forfeited his happiness; the Second, under a necessity or infallibility of entire obedience, through the union of the divine nature with the human, whereby it became as impossible that Christ should fail in his obedience, as that the Godhead should fail the human nature which it had assumed.

[2] To the Law National, under the obligation of which he was born, as being of the seed of Abraham and of the tribe of Judah.

By this national law I mean both the Judicial and Ceremonial Laws of the Jews, of whom Christ was, according to the flesh. For even the Ceremonial Law was in a sense, national, and peculiar to the Jews: yea, and they themselves thought so, seeing they did not impose the observation of the Mosaical rites and observances upon proselyted heathens (those whom they called *Proselyti Portæ*) but admitted them to the participation of the same common hope and salvation with themselves, upon the observation of the Law of Nature and the Seven traditional Commandments of Noah. Now Christ was made under both these laws: the Law of his Nature, and the Law of his Nation: under the former, primarily and necessarily, as he was man; and, therefore, he must obey the law of right reason: under the second, secondarily and by consequence; because the law of nature and right reason dictates that God is to be obeyed in all his positive commands. Wherefore he himself tells us, Matt. iii. 15, that it became him *to fulfil all righteousness.*

Thus, then, his Righteousness of Obedience was both personal and perfect. And so, likewise,

(2) His Righteousness of Satisfaction was personal and plenary.

As divine justice could exact no punishment from him, upon his own personal account; he being holy, harmless, and undefiled: so did it receive full satisfaction from him, for the sins of others imputed to him. Neither came he from under the penalty, till he had discharged the very uttermost farthing that was due. And therefore his active and passive obedience, as they are commonly termed, were both perfect and complete. What the sufferings of Christ were; how far he paid the *idem,* and how far the *tantidem;* I shall not discuss. The Greek Liturgy checks our too curious inquisitiveness in this search, by calling them αγνωστα παθη, "unknown sufferings."

Only it may be here queried, "Since that all righteousness is a conformity to some law, according to what law was Christ obliged to undergo the penalty for sin? Could the same law bind him to obedience and suffering too? Or is it consistent with the measures of justice, to inflict the penalty of the law on him, who had fully observed the commands of it?"

To this I answer: That the same law cannot oblige both to obedience and to suffering: and, therefore, Christ Jesus was not bound over to undergo the penalty by that law, the precepts of which he had fulfilled. Had he been liable to suffer by the same law that we are, he would not have been a Mediator, but a Malefactor.

Christ was, therefore, under a Twofold Law, in conformity to which he obtained his Twofold Righteousness.

[1] The common and ordinary Law of Obedience, unto which he, as well as others, was subjected upon the account of his human nature.

[2] The peculiar Law of the Mediator.

By the Law of the Mediator I mean, that compact and engagement, which Christ entered into with God the Father, to become our Surety, to pay our debts, and to bear the punishment due to our sins; which I shall hereafter more largely open to you, when I come to treat of the Covenant of Redemption.

Now when Christ had perfectly fulfilled the common and ordinary Law, both of his Nature as a man and of his Nation as a Jew, it could in no wise be just, that he should also undergo the penalty by virtue of this law, which threatened it only against the transgressors. And, therefore, when the ordinary law acquitteth and dischargeth him as righteous, the Law of the Mediator interposeth, seizeth on him, and bindeth him over unto punishment. And, if Christ had not borne this punishment, though still he would have been personally righteous as a Man, yet he would not have been righteous as a Mediator, because not conformable to the Law of the Mediation or Suretyship, to which he had voluntarily subjected himself, and which obliged him to suffer: John x. 18; Phil. ii. 8; but, the obligation of both laws being fully answered, he hath thereby obtained a righteousness according unto both; and, being both perfect in his obedience and perfected by his sufferings, he is become an Almighty Saviour, *able to save unto the uttermost all* those who *come unto God by him.* That is the Seventh Position.

8. *Christ having such an abundant righteousness of his own, God, the Lawgiver, hath been graciously pleased to bestow that righteousness upon, and impute it unto us; to all intents and purposes, as if it had been our own Personal Righteousness.*

And in this particular lies the great mystery of our Justification.

And therefore, to explain it, I shall lay down these two things:

(1) Imputed Righteousness is not God's accounting us righteous when we are not so; for that would be a false judgment, and utterly inconsistent with the truth, wisdom, and righteousness of the

divine nature: but, first, the righteousness of Christ is become ours by the conveyance which God hath appointed to make it over unto us; and, then, it is imputed or reckoned for our Justification.

For the imputation of Christ's righteousness is not *res vaga*, that which may agree with any person in any state and condition; as if there were no more required to justify the most profligate sinner, but only that God reckon him righteous: no; but there must be something presupposed in us, either as a qualification, condition, or means, that must give us a title to the righteousness of Christ. And that is, as shall appear in the next position, the Grace of Faith: so that, Christ's righteousness being made ours by faith, God doth then actually impute it to our Justification.

And, therefore, the righteousness of Jesus Christ is not by God only thought to be ours; but it is ours really and truly, in a law sense. To affirm, that God imputes that to be ours which indeed is not, would be to make it only a putative righteousness, to invade the divine verity, and to lay the imputation of a false and partial judgment upon him. The righteousness of Christ is not ours, because God accounts it to be so; but, on the contrary, therefore God accounts it ours, because it is so. It becomes not ours, by God's imputation; for it must be ours, before any act of imputation can be true and just: but, rather, it becomes ours, by divine designation or donation, whereby God hath made over the righteousness of his Son as a dowry and patrimony to faith. God doth not justify us, that we may be righteous; but because we are already righteous: and that, not only imperfectly, by the inherent righteous qualities that are implanted in our Regeneration; but most perfectly, by the righteousness of Christ consigned over unto us in our Regeneration, by virtue of Faith, which is a main part of it.

Certainly, that God, who hath told us, that *he, that justifieth the wicked*....is an *abomination* unto him: Prov. xvii. 15, will never himself make that the process of his justice. It is true, the Apostle, Rom. iv. 5, saith, that God *justifieth the ungodly:* but this must be understood, either in a limited sense, for those who are in part so, being but in part sanctified: or, rather, it must be understood, not in a compounded sense, as if Ungodliness and Justification were states compatible to the same person; but in a divided sense, that is, that he justifies such who heretofore were ungodly; but their Sanctification intervenes between their Ungodliness and their Justification. In which order the Apostle recounts it, 1 Cor. vi. 11; *Such were some of you: but ye are....sanctified, but ye are justified.* So that, in order of nature, Faith, which is a principal part of our

Sanctification, precedes our right to Christ's righteousness, because it conveys it; and our right to Christ's righteousness precedes God's actual imputation of it to our Justification, because it must first be ours, before it can be with truth accounted so.

It is very wonderful, that the Papists should so obstinately resolve not to understand this doctrine of Imputed Righteousness; but still cavil against it, as a contradiction. It being, say they, as utterly impossible to become righteous through the righteousness of another, as to become healthful through another's health, or wise by another's wisdom. And some, besides this slander of a contradiction, give us this scoff into the bargain: That the Protestants, in defending an Imputative Righteousness, show only an Imputative Modesty and Imputative Learning. But they might do well to consider, that some denominations are physical; others only legal and juridical. Those, which are physical, do indeed necessarily require inexistent forms, from which the denominations should result: thus, to be healthful, to be wise and learned, do require inherent health, wisdom, and learning. But, to be righteous, may be taken either in a physical sense, and so it denotes an inherent righteousness, which in the best is imperfect; or else it may be taken in a forensic or juridical sense, and so the perfect righteousness of another, who is our Surety, may become ours, and be imputed to our Justification. It is the righteousness of another, personally: it is our righteousness, juridically: because, by faith, we have a right and title to it; which right and title accrue unto us, by the promise and covenant of God, and our union to our Surety.

Indeed, some there are, who refer our Justification wholly to the merits of Jesus Christ; but yet lay down a scheme and method of this doctrine, not altogether so honourable to our Blessed Saviour as they ought. These affirm,* that Christ, by his righteousness, hath merited that God should account our Faith to be itself our Righteousness! that his is only the procatarctic or meritorious cause procuring this grand privilege to Faith, that it should itself be our Righteousness and the matter of our Justification. Wherein they are so far injurious to the merits of our Blessed Saviour, as to make them only the remote cause of our Justification; and, consequently, necessary, rather that faith might have an object, than that we might have righteousness. But of this, perhaps, more hereafter.

However, this, which hath been spoken, may serve to give us a more distinct notion of Imputed Righteousness: which is not ours, merely because God imputes it to us; but because he hath, by deed

* Armin. Disp. Theol. Thes. 17.

of gift in his promise, bestowed it upon us when we believe, and then imputes it to our Justification.

(2) That this righteousness of Christ, thus made ours, may serve to all ends and purposes for which we stand in need of a righteousness, it is necessary, that both his active righteousness, or his Righteousness of Obedience, and also his passive righteousness, the Righteousness of his Satisfaction in suffering for us, be made ours, and imputed to us for our Justification.

Though this position be much controverted; yet, possibly, the truth of it will appear from the grounds formerly laid, viz., That there are two ends, for which we stand in need of a righteousness: the one, is a freeing of us from the penalty threatened: the other, is an entitling of us to the reward promised. Now had we no other but the Righteousness of Christ's Satisfaction made over unto us, this indeed would perfectly free us from our liableness to punishment; for, if our Surety hath undergone it for us, we ourselves are not liable: but, still, we should need a righteousness to entitle us to the reward; and that must necessarily be a Righteousness of perfect Obedience. For, as I noted before, it is not said Suffer this, and live; but Do this, and live: and, consequently, it must be obedience and not suffering, the active and not the passive righteousness of Christ, that can give us a right unto eternal life. It is true, the satisfaction of Christ doth give a right unto eternal life concomitantly, but not formally; that is, wherever guilt is removed, there a title to heaven is procured: yet the formal reason of our title to heaven is different from the formal reason of the remission of our sins: this, results from the imputation of Christ's sufferings; that, of his obedience.

But, if any should in this particular dissent, as many very orthodox divines, Piscator and others, have done, upon the account of the impossibility of a neutral estate, i. e. a condition neither of happiness nor misery, life nor death; I will not earnestly contend about it: so that this foundation stand firm and unshaken, that we are saved only by the righteousness of Christ made ours by God's donation, and imputed to our Justification. Yet Rom. v. 18, 19, votes for it.

9. *This Righteousness of Christ is conveyed and made over unto us by our Faith.*

That is the grace, which God hath purposed to honour with our Justification.

I shall not long insist upon this, because I reserve the more full handling of it to another place. Only this is here to be observed,

that faith gives us a title to the righteousness of Christ, and makes it ours, not only by the promise of God, but as it is the bond of union between Christ and the soul. By faith it is, that we are made mystically one with Christ; living members in his body; fruitful branches of that heavenly and spiritual vine. We have the communication of the same Name: *So also is Christ,* saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. xii. 12, speaking there of Christ Mystical, both his Person and his Church. We have the same Relations: *I ascend unto my Father and* to *your Father;* John xx. 17. We are made partakers of the same Spirit: for *if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his:* Rom. viii. 9; *He, that is joined unto the Lord, is one Spirit:* 1 Cor. vi. 17. And, finally, the very Life, that we live, is said not to be ours, but *Christ liveth in* us, and that we *live by the faith of the Son of God:* Gal. ii. 20.

So that, being thus one with Christ, his righteousness becomes our righteousness, even as our sins became his: and God deals with Christ and believers, as if they were one person: the sins of believers are charged upon Christ, as though they were his; and the righteousness of Christ is reckoned to believers as theirs. Neither is God unjust, either in the one or the other imputation; because they are mystically one: and this mystical union is a sufficient ground for imputation.

Yet from this union flows the participation only of the benefits of his Mediatorship: for we are not hereby transubstantiated or deified, as some of late years have blasphemously conceited. Neither the Godhead of Christ, nor his essential righteousness as God, nor his divine and infinite properties, are made ours; but only the fruits and effects of his mediation: so that, hereupon, God graciously accounts of us as if we had done in our own persons, whatsoever Christ hath done for us; because, by faith, Christ and we are made one.

These are the Positions, which I thought necessary, to instruct us in a true notion of righteousness, and the manner how we become righteous.

iv. I shall deduce from them a few COROLLARIES.

1. Hence we learn, *the true Difference that there is, between the Covenant of Grace and the Covenant of Works.*

Whatsoever vast disproportion some have imagined; yet, indeed, these are not distinct covenants, for the matter and substance of them, but only in the distinct method and manner of participating the same righteousness. They both require full satisfaction, to obtain remission of sin; and perfect obedience, to obtain eternal

life. But, in this, lies the only difference; that the rigour and severity of the Covenant of Works requires that this righteousness be personal, and wrought out by ourselves; which is relaxed to us by the Covenant of Grace, promising us remission and acceptation through the righteousness of our Surety, conveyed to us by our faith.

2. Hence see, *what influence Faith hath into our Justification.*

It is not itself our Righteousness, or the matter of our Justification; but the instrument or means, call it which you please, of conveying over unto us the righteousness of Christ our Surety, which is perfectly conformable to the Law of Works, and the matter by which we are justified.

Some there are, who would have Faith to justify us, as it is the Fulfilling of the Condition of the Covenant of Grace.

But, possibly, this difference might be soon compromised, if the tenor of both covenants be heedfully observed. The Covenant of Works promiseth life, if we obey in our own Persons: but the Covenant of Grace relaxeth this; and promiseth life, if we obey in our Surety. The condition of both is perfect obedience: in the one, personal; in the other, imputed. And the way how we should obtain a title to this obedience of our Surety, is, by believing. So that, when the Covenant of Grace saith, "Believe and you shall be saved," it speaks compendiously; and, were it drawn out at length, it would run thus, "Procure the righteousness of Christ to be thine, and thou shalt be saved: Believe, and this righteousness, which will save thee, shall be thine."

Here, then, are two conditions: the one, fundamental, primary, and immediate to our Justification; and that is, the Righteousness of Christ: the other, remote and secondary; and that is, our Faith, which is the condition of the primary condition, and consequently of the covenant. This will appear more evident in this syllogism: If the righteousness of Christ be made thine, thou shalt be saved: if thou believest, the righteousness of Christ shall be made thine: therefore, from the first to the last, if thou believest thou shalt be saved.

Now, though Christ's obedience be the principal, and our faith the secondary condition; yet, usually, in propounding the Covenant of Grace, the former is silenced, and the latter only mentioned.

And this may be for two reasons:

(1) Because, though Christ's righteousness be more immediate to our Justification, yet faith is more immediate to our Practice; and, therefore, it is of more concernment to know how Justification might be obtained, than critically to know wherein it doth consist. And,

(2) Because faith doth necessarily relate unto the righteousness of Jesus Christ. So that, to say "Believe, and you shall be saved," doth virtually and implicitly tell us also, that our Justification and Salvation must be by the righteousness of another.

If, therefore, those, who affirm that Faith justifies, as it is the Performance of the Condition of the Covenant, intend it only in this remote and secondary sense, I see no cause of controversy or disagreement about it. That is a Second Corollary.

3. Another inference may be this: *That we should never expect Justification nor Salvation, upon any other terms than a Perfect Righteousness, fully answering the tenor of the Covenant of Works.*

Answering it, I say, as to the substance of what it requires, although the manner of obtaining that righteousness be not conformable thereunto, but unto the Law of Grace. If we cannot produce a righteousness every way perfect, and tender it to God as ours, we cannot with reason expect but that God should seek for satisfaction to his justice upon us in our everlasting destruction. Ours it must be, through our union to Jesus Christ by the bond of faith; which is a sufficient foundation for a real communication of all benefits and interests.

4. Hence we may learn, *That the two righteousnesses of which the text speaks,* the Righteousness which is of Works, and the Righteousness which is of Faith, *do not differ, as to the nature of the things themselves, but only as to the manner of their being made ours.*

*The Righteousness,* which is *of the Law,* must be of perfect Obedience or of full Satisfaction; *the Righteousness, which is of Faith,* is both of Obedience and of Satisfaction: so that, for the matter, there is no difference between them; for the Righteousness of Faith is no other than what the Law of Works required. But, herein, lies the only difference, that the one must be personal, the other imputed. The Law requires obedience or satisfaction to be wrought out in our own persons: grace mitigates this strictness; and is contented with the obedience and satisfaction of another, apprehended and applied to us by our believing.

And thus you see, at large, the nature of Righteousness, both Legal and Evangelical; wherein they do consist; and what is the true difference between them. The knowledge of these things is of absolute necessity to a clear perception of the Doctrine of the Covenants and of Justification. Some, perhaps, because these truths are abstruse and knotty, may think that I am teaching you, as Gideon is said to have taught the men of Succoth, Judges viii. 7, with the thorns and briers of the wilderness. Yet I doubt not but

by a diligent recollection of what hath been delivered, you may even of these thorns, gather figs. Sure I am, that God, who once spake to Moses out of a bush, can speak to you out of these thickets. And, though they do not so immediately tend to the exciting of affections, yet those affections may be well suspected to be irregular, and experience shows they are seldom durable, that are not built upon a right information of the Judgment.

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These things being thus discussed and stated, let us now proceed to a more DISTINCT AND PARTICULAR CONSIDERATION OF THE COVENANTS. Which I have told you were principally Two: the one, made with mankind in Adam, at his first creation; the other, made with mankind, upon his restoration. The tenor of the former is, *Do this, and live:* the tenor of the latter, He, that believeth on Christ Jesus, shall be saved.

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I. I shall first treat concerning the former, the COVENANT OF WORKS: the sum of which is, *Do this, and live;* or, in the words of my text, *The man, which doeth those things, shall live by them.*

And, herein, two things are chiefly to be observed: the Promise, which is life; and the Condition, which is *Do this,* or perfect obedience.

i. I shall begin with the former, the PROMISE MADE UNTO ADAM, AND ALL MANKIND IN HIM: *The man, which doeth those things, shall live;* which, by the rule of contraries, implies the threatening and curse against all transgressors. If he shall live, who fulfilleth the Law; then, by the contrary proportion, he shall die, who transgresseth it. And this threatening we find expressly annexed to one particular command of the Covenant of Works; Gen. ii. 17; *In the day that thou eatest thereof,* that is, of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, *thou shalt surely die:* and to the general tenor of the whole; Gal. iii. 10; *Cursed is every one, that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the Law to do them.*

Concerning this Life and Death, much difficulty there is to state wherein they did consist: and, truly, the Holy Ghost having spoken so sparingly of it, it would be presumption, and an affectation of being wise above what is written, to determine any thing positively and magisterially herein; God taking more care to inform us how we might recover our lost and forfeited bliss, than wherein it consisted. Yet, possibly, something may, with modesty and probability, be spoken of it; that may give us some satisfaction in the clearing up, if not of all, yet of some truths that are pertinent to this subject, and worthy our knowledge and acceptance.

1. As for the *Life* here promised,

(1) There are two opinions, that carry a fair probability.

[1] That, by Life here, is meant the Perpetuity and Continuance of that Estate wherein Adam was created; being a state of perfect happiness and blessedness, free from sin, and therefore free from misery: he, the friend of God and lord of the visible creation; all things being subject unto him, and himself subject only to his Maker: there being a perfect agreement between his God and him, and between him and himself; no tormenting conscience, no gnawing guilt, no pale fears, no pains, no sickness, no death. He might converse with God, boldly and sweetly: and God would have conversed with him, familiarly and endearingly. Then there would have been no desertion, on God's part; because no apostasy, on his: no clouds in his mind, no tempest in his breast, no tears, nor cause for any; but a continual calm and serenity of soul, enjoying all the innocent delights that God and nature could afford, and all this for ever. The whole world had been but a higher heaven and a lower. Earth had been but heaven a little allayed; and Adam had been as an angel incarnate, and God all in all: and all this to be enjoyed eternally, without diminution, without period. Oh, how great a happiness may we conceive the state of upright man to be! which nothing can resemble, nothing exceed; unless it be the happiness and bliss to which fallen man shall be restored. Had not sin soiled and drossed the world, it should never have felt the purgation of the last fire; the elements should never have been dissolved, the heavens folded up, nor the host of them disbanded; but man had been the everlasting inhabitants of an everlasting world.

This is the first opinion concerning the Life promised in the Covenant of Works.

[2] Others again, to avoid some inconveniences which might follow upon the former opinion, wherof the greatest seems to be a populousness beyond what the world could contain, think it more probable to affirm, That when the multitude of mankind (which certainly had been far greater than all the generations since the beginning of it amount unto, since sin and the curse have hindered the fecundity of the first blessing) had so far increased as to straiten the bounds of their abode, God would have Translated them to Heaven, without their seeing or tasting of Death. As, when a land is surcharged with inhabitants, the state transplants whole colonies of them, to disburden itself: so, when this earth should have been crowded with an overplus of mankind, God would have transplanted whole colonies of them; and would have removed them from a

terrestrial to a celestial Paradise. God doth now, indeed, remove believers to that state of happiness: but yet they first descend into the dust: death is their passage into life, and the grave their entrance into glory: we read but of two men only, who leaped that ditch; and they were Enoch and Elijah: of the one, it is said that God took him; and, of the other, that God fetched him in a fiery chariot. But, had not sin come into the world, this might have been the common and ordinary passage out of it: Eve had never been terrified by the King of Terrors, nor struggled at his approach, nor feared nor detested the separation of those dear companions, the soul and body: for there had been no such thing as death; but both soul and body, jointly and at once, should have been rapt up to the enjoyment of the same God and the same happiness, which our faith now embraces, and our hope expects.

Which of these two is the very truth I cannot determine; though the grand inconvenience, consequent upon the former, may incline a considering mind to adhere rather to the latter.

(2) Now here fall in Two Questions to be resolved. Whether Adam, in innocence, may be said to be immortal. What is meant by the Tree of Life, spoken of in the history of Adam, and said to be planted in the midst of Paradise.

[1] To the first I answer, that Adam, in his state of innocence, was immortal.

For sin is not only the sting, but the cause and parent of death; and gives it not only its terrors, but its being. What saith the Apostle, Rom. v. 12? *By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin:* so that, had there been no sin, there had been no death. But yet, even then, Adam had in him the contemplation of contrary qualities; and, therefore, the principles of death and corruption. And, therefore, his immortality was not such, as the angels enjoy in heaven; for they are not composed of jarring and quarrelling elements, being pure spiritual substances: nor was it such, as the bodies of glorified saints shall hereafter possess; for they shall be made wholly impassible, and set free from the reach of outward impressions, and the discords of elemental mutinies, that might impair their vigour or endanger their dissolution. But it was an immortality, by donation; and by the privilege of an especial Providence, which engaged itself to sway and overrule that tendency which was in his body to corruption, and, notwithstanding the contrarieties and dissentions of a terrestrial constitution, to continue him in life, so long as he should continue himself in his obedience.

[2] And, as the means and sacrament of this, God appointed the

fruit of the Tree of Life, that the eating thereof might perpetuate his duration.

Which Tree of Life, what it was, and why so called, was the second query.

Some suppose it was so named, because the fruit of it had a Natural Virtue to preserve and prolong life; and that Adam, using it as his ordinary food, should, by the medicinal force of it, have kept off or repaired all incident decays. But this, I think, sounds somewhat of the Rabbi: for the guard, which God set upon this tree, lest fallen Adam should once taste it and live for ever, sufficiently overthrows this conceit; and evinces that immortality could not be the natural effect and production of it.

But the best and most received opinion is, that it was therefore called the Tree of Life, because it was a Sacrament added for the confirmation of the promise of life. That, as now, under the Covenant of Grace, God hath instituted Baptism and the Lord's Supper, that, by being washed with the water of the one, and eating and drinking the bread and wine of the other, he might seal to us the stability of that covenant, wherein he hath promised eternal life to those who believe: so God gave Adam this Tree of Life, that, by his eating thereof, he might seal to him the faithfulness of the Covenant of Works, wherein he had promised life to him if he would obey; that, as sure as he tasted of the fruit of that tree, so sure he should live, if he would perform the commands of God. For every covenant hath its sacraments or seals annexed to it. The Old Covenant of Grace was sealed by Circumcision, called therefore *a seal of the righteousness of faith*, Rom. iv. 11; and likewise the Passover was another Sacrament of that covenant: the New Covenant of Grace is sealed by Baptism and the Lord's Supper. And, in like manner, the Covenant of Works was sealed by the fruit of this Tree of Life: which was so called, not from any inherent quality of its own, but only sacramentally, because it did confirm the promise of life; that, as surely as Adam did eat thereof, so surely he should live if he would obey.

(3) By these obscure and uncertain things, which cannot be recommended unto you as undoubted verities, but only as probable conjectures, you may perceive how much we are in the dark, and how subject to error, when we pretend to define and positively determine what the Holy Ghost hath thought fit to conceal.

Yet Two things I account most certain; and, with which, it will be good to put a stop to our inquisitiveness.

[1] That this Life, promised in the Covenant of Works, was a

state, made happy and blessed, by the confluence of all good things, outward and inward, temporal and spiritual; whatsoever man's condition could need, or his will desire.

So long as there were no defects of righteousness and holiness in his nature, there would have been none of happiness suitable to his capacities; nor should he have any complaints to make, nor cause for them.

[2] That this Life, whether eternal on earth or in heaven, though so perfectly happy in its kind; yet was far short of that glory and happiness, which is now promised to believers under the Covenant of Grace.

Christ not only died to redeem a forfeiture, but his obedience merited the purchase of a richer inheritance, and he will instate his in the possession of far more transcendent glory. Adam was never so happy in his innocence, as he is now, since his fall, by his faith and repentance. He is now exalted far higher than at first he stood. And, therefore, St. Gregory the Great, considering the advantage which we have gained by our restoration through Christ, could not forbear exclaiming, *O felix culpa, quæ talem meruit habere Redemptorem!* "Happy sin, that obtained such a Redeemer!" And Clemens Alexandrinus hath a like passage: ὃ ἐκ παραδεισου πεσων μειζον ὑπακοης αθλον ἁρπασας απολαμβανει. "His disobedience cast Adam out of Paradise: his obedience instates him in a far higher and greater reward, even Heaven." So that, as Christ saith concerning John the Baptist, *Among all that are born of women, there hath not arisen a greater than* he: yet *he, that is least in the kingdom of heaven, is greater;* the same may I say concerning Adam in innocence: Among all the visible creation, there was none greater nor more happy than he; yet the least believer, who is now in the Kingdom of Heaven, is far greater than he when he was Lord of Paradise.

Yea, should we suppose, that Adam, after he had long continued in his innocence and obedience, should have been assumed into heaven; yet a believer's glory there, purchased by the merits of his Saviour, shall far outshine whatsoever glory Adam could have acquired by his own obedience. For, so much approximation and union as there is of the creature unto God, the fountain of all glory; so much participation is there of glory from God, by the creature. Now Adam's union unto God was only moral; such an union as love and friendship doth beget: but a believer's union unto God is nearer, and mystical, and ineffable; and, therefore, from this nearer union will flow a greater glory. God hath wedded our nature to

himself, in the hypostatical union; and he hath wedded our persons to himself, in a mystical union: neither of which could have had place under the Covenant of Works; and, therefore, the union not being so great and close, the glory promised therein would not have been so glorious, nor the life and immortality so blessed, as that which is now brought to light by the Gospel.

This you may take, in answer to the First Question, What the Life is, that is promised in the Covenant of Works: *The man, which doeth those things, shall live by them.*

2. Our next inquiry is, What *Death* it is, that this Covenant threatens: *In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die* the death. And herein, truly, we are almost as far to seek, as in the former.

(1) Yet thus much is certain.

[1] That, by death, is meant the separation of the soul and body, which is a Temporal Death: together with all its forerunners and concomitants; pain, grief, weakness, sickness, and whatsoever doth either cause it or attend it.

It is also certain, that here is meant Spiritual Death; the loss of the image and favour of God; a despoiling the soul of the ornaments of knowledge, grace, and righteousness, with which in its first creation it was beautified. For, as the separation of the soul from the body is the temporal death of the man; so the separation of the soul from the love and grace of God, is the spiritual death of the soul. And,

[3] As certain it may be, that hereby is meant likewise an eternal Death, to endure for ever, because to be inflicted by an infinite justice.

(2) But the main difficulty is, whether this eternal death should have consisted in the utter annihilation of the soul, after its separation from the body by a temporal death; or whether both soul and body should have been again united, to suffer eternally some torments proportionable to those, which the damned now suffer in hell.

To this I shall give you what I judge most probable.

And that is,

[1] That the death threatened in the Covenant of Works would not have been the utter annihilation of the guilty soul, after its separation from the body.

Because annihilation is not a punishment suited to the eternally glorifying of God's justice and power; since it would be in one moment transacted, and put the soul out of the reach and from under the dominion of omnipotency itself: for, although *non esse* be *maxi-*

*mum malum metaphysicum;* yet, certainly, God will not glorify himself by metaphysical notions, but by physical and sensible punishments.

[2] Whatsoever punishment had been eternally inflicted, either upon the separate soul alone, as some hold, or upon the whole man both soul and body, as others affirm, had been more mild and mitigated under the Covenant of Works, than now the torments of the damned will be, who have despised the Covenant of Grace.

For, as the life promised then was inferior to the life promised now; so the death threatened then was not so rigorous, so tormenting, as the death threatened now. Certainly, the tenders, that are made to men, of Christ, and salvation by him, are not mere indifferent things; that, though they slight and reject them, yet they shall be in no worse condition than when they were born: but a despised Saviour, an abused Grace, a neglected Salvation, are such things as will add rage to the unquenchable fire, and make it eat deeper into the soul, than if there had been no Saviour provided, no Grace offered, no Salvation purchased; but they had been all left in their first fallen estate, without hope, without means, without possibility of recovery.

And, thus much, concerning the Life promised and the Death threatened, in the Covenant of Works.

(3) Only, it may be queried, how God verified this threatening upon Adam. The threatening runs thus: *In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die:* and yet we read that Adam lived nine hundred years, and more, after this peremptory sentence. How is this consistent with God's justice and veracity, who not only did not inflict death on him, on the day of his transgression, but reprieved him for many hundred years after?

To this I answer, briefly; that, when it is said, *In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt die:* by this is not meant, that he should presently upon his sinning undergo actual death; nor only that death should be then due unto him, as some would have it, for so it might, and yet never have been inflicted: but the meaning is, that he should be liable and obnoxious, yea and ordained, to death; death should certainly be inflicted on him in the time, that God had appointed, and which he foresaw would make most for the glory of his holiness and justice. "In that day thou shalt die," is no more, than "In that day thou shalt be a mortal creature: thy life shall be forfeited to justice, to be cut off whensoever the righteous and holy God shall please."

ii. Let us, in the next place, proceed to consider the *Condition of*

*the Covenant of Works;* and that the Apostle tells us is, *Do this. The man, which doeth these things, shall live by them.* By doing these things is meant obedience, both in its perfection and perseverance; for perfect obedience could not justify, unless it were persevering obedience; for we find that Adam himself was not justified by his perfect conformity to the law for a time, because he did not continue in it.

Concerning this obedience, which was required in the Covenant of Works, we may observe,

1. That *the rule of Adam's obedience in his state of innocence was principally the dictates and promptings of his own nature, and secondarily any positive law that should be given him by God.*

So that, when God bids him do this and live, he doth but point him inwards to see what was written upon his own heart, and to act suitably thereunto. God gave him one command, which was not written there; and that was, not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. And some suppose also the command of sanctifying the Sabbath-Day to have been a positive law given to Adam: Gen. ii. 3, where it is said *God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it:* others suppose those words to be brought in only by way of prolepsis or anticipation. However that be, yet certain it is, that God laid very few injunctions upon upright man, besides what the dictates of his very nature and reason did prompt him to: but, if many more had been then imposed on him, they would all have been ultimately resolved into that grand law of nature, That whatsoever God commands we ought to obey. And, therefore, though the not eating the fruit of such a tree were not a law of nature, yet this was, that he ought not to have done what God forbad him. So that, *Do this,* was to Adam no more than "Act only according to the rules of nature and right reason, and thou shalt live."

2. *The Covenant of Works required of Adam all those things, which are now required of us under the Covenant of Grace; except it be those which suppose a sinful and a fallen state.*

Some duties there are, which are in themselves absolute and perfect, and do not pre-suppose any sin or corruption in our nature: and such are, to love God; to reverence and worship him; to depend upon him, and believe in him; and to commit all our affairs and the conduct of our whole lives, to his guidance and government. Other duties there are, which do necessarily connote and pre-suppose imperfection and sin: as patience and submission under afflictions; confessing of guilt; acts of repentance, and of faith

in the merits of Jesus Christ; relieving the necessities of the poor, forgiving wrongs and injuries; and many other such like. Now the duties of the former sort, which are required of us, were likewise required of Adam; and his continuance in them would have been his Justification; but not the duties of the latter sort; for a state of innocence and perfection excludes all such duties, because it excludes all that imperfection and guilt, upon the account of which alone such duties are become necessary. Adam had the innate radical power to do them; but no occasion to exercise it.

3. *Adam, in innocency, had a power to do whatsoever the Law or the God of Nature did require; and, by this his perfect obedience, to have preserved the righteousness of his first estate, and his undoubted right unto that life that was promised.*

God is so just and merciful, that he lays no commands upon his creatures to any thing that is impossible, unless it be made so by an impotency wilfully contracted. God may, indeed, justly require that from us, which is now beyond our power to perform; as the perfect fulfilling of his Law: and that, because it was once possible for us in our representative. And if we have lost our power of obeying, that does not prejudice God's right of commanding: no more than the inability of a voluntary bankrupt dischargeth his obligation to his creditors. In the state of innocence, God suited the power of his creature to the law which he intended to give him; and made his obligation to duty commensurate with his ability to perform it.

4. *That obedience, which was the condition of the Covenant of Works, was to be performed by Adam in his own person, and not by a surety or undertaker: and, therefore, the Covenant of Works hath no Mediator.*

And this is the great, yea, for ought I can see, the only real difference between the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace. They both require the same obedience and righteousness to justify men: only, the Covenant of Grace allows it to be the righteousness of another; but the Covenant of Works requires that it be wrought out by the man himself. It is true, we live by doing this, as well as Adam; but we do it by our Surety, not in our own Persons. And hence we may learn what covenant it was, that Christ, the Second Adam, was made under. It was strictly the Covenant of Works, of personal righteousness; the same, that God entered into with Adam: and, therefore, he is called by the Apostle the Second Adam; because, the First Adam failing in his undertaking, he rose up in his stead to be our federal head and representative: and, seeing the first did not rightly manage the trust deposited, Christ took

the whole affair out of his hands, and hath perfectly, fully, and faithfully transacted it.

We have thus seen, both the Promise and the Condition of the Covenant.

iii. Our next enquiry should be concerning THE PERSONS, WITH WHOM IT WAS FIRST MADE, AND BY WHOM IT WAS FIRST BROKEN.

1. But before I come to that, it may not be impertinent to *Resolve a Query*, that may arise upon what hath been already said. And that is, Whether the afflictions and temporal evils, that believers suffer in this life, be not inflicted on them by virtue of the curse and threatening of the Covenant of Works: *In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt die*, and *The soul, that sinneth, it shall die.* For the curse of dying comprehends in it, not only temporal death itself; but all other miseries and troubles, that we undergo in this present life. And, indeed, it is worth the enquiry, whether the afflictions and sufferings of true believers, be properly punishments, or not.

To resolve this, we must know, that God hath two ends respecting himself, for which he brings any evil upon men. The one, is the manifestation of his holiness: the other, is the satisfaction of his justice. And, accordingly as any affliction tends to these, so it is either properly a punishment, or barely a chastisement and correction. If God intend by the affliction to satisfy his justice, then it is properly a punishment; and flows from the curse and threatening of the covenant: but, if God intend thereby only to glorify and manifest his holiness, then it is not a proper punishment, neither hath it any thing of the rancour and venom of the curse in it; but it is only a fatherly correction, proceeding from love and mercy.

But,

(1) The afflictions and outward evils, that true Christians suffer, are inflicted by God upon them, to the end that he might manifest his purity and holiness.

Indeed, there are many gracious ends, respecting believers themselves, wherefore God doth afflict them: as, to exercise their graces, to keep them humble and dependant, to starve up their lusts, to wean them from the world, and to fit them for a better. But the great end, respecting God himself, is, that, by these afflictions, they might know and see how holy a God they have to deal with; who doth so perfectly hate sin, that he will follow it with chastisements wheresoever it be found. Though the sin be pardoned, though the sinner be beloved; yet God will afflict him: not, indeed, to satisfy his justice, for that is done for him by Jesus Christ: but to satisfy

his holiness, and vindicate the honour of his purity in the would, and himself too from contempt, when those, who will presume to offend, shall certainly smart for it: 2 Sam. xii. 13, 14.

(2) The afflictions and evils, that believers suffer, are not inflicted by God, that thereby he might satisfy his justice upon them; and, therefore, they are not from the curse of the Law, nor properly punishments for their sins.

Punishment always connotes satisfaction for transgressing the Law. But this satisfaction to divine justice is not to be wrought out by believers themselves; and, therefore, whatsoever they suffer is not strictly punishment. Christ hath fully satisfied all the demands of justice; and, therefore, no farther satisfaction is expected from them, since that could not be consistent with the rules and measures of justice to punish both the surety and principal too. The curse of the Law poured all its poison into Christ; and there is not one drop of it that falls besides upon believers: Gal. iii. 13. *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us.* For that death, and all those evils threatened in the Covenant of Works, are curses: not merely because they are grievous and afflicting; but because inflicted on transgressors in order to the satisfaction of divine justice upon them. And therefore Christ is said to be accursed, and his death to have been an accursed death, (*Cursed is every one, that hangeth on a tree*) not because he died, nor because he died a most bitter, painful, and shameful death: but because he was ordained to undergo this death, as a satisfaction to the justice of God for the sins of men. And, truly, should God inflict those very evils which he now doth upon believers, to the end that he might thereby raise some satisfaction to his justice, though the evils themselves would not be greater, nor more sharp and painful, yet they would all be curses, and make them too accursed creatures: for the true notion of a curse and of a punishment, consists not in the quality or the measure of the evil suffered; but in the inflicting of it as penal, and in order to the satisfaction of justice.

Hence, therefore, with what calmness and sweet peace may a true Christian look upon all his afflictions! Though they be sore and heavy, and seem to carry much wrath in them, yet they have nothing of the curse. The sting was received, all of it, into the body of Christ: so that now the Covenant of Works is disarmed to him; and he need not fear the dreadful thunder of its threatenings, for the bolt is already discharged upon another. Indeed, were it God's intent to satisfy his justice by the evils which he brings upon me, I might then tremble with horror and astonishment; and account

every the slightest suffering a presage and pledge of far greater and eternal to come: but if I have an interest in the righteousness of Christ, justice is already satisfied, and the curse removed; and all the sorrows and afflictions which I suffer, are but the corrections of a Gracious Father, not the revenge of an Angry God. Am I pinched by poverty? that is no curse: God doth not seek revenge upon me; but only keeps me from the allurements to sin and vanity. Am I afflicted with losses in my relations or estate? that is no curse: God doth not thereby seek satisfaction to his justice; but only takes these from me, that he might be all in all. Am I tormented with pain, and weakened with diseases; and will these bring death upon me? yet diseases and death itself are no curses; but only a necessary passage from life to life, a bad step to Canaan, a short night between one day and another. Revenging justice is satisfied; and, therefore, come what afflictions it shall please God to try me with, they are all weak and weaponless; without sting, without curse in them.

But, most sad and miserable is the condition of wicked men, whose infidelity excludes them from having a right in the sufferings of Christ. For there is not the least affliction that befals them, the least gripe of any pain, the least loss in their estates, the most slight and inconsiderable cross that is, but it comes upon them through the Curse of the law. God is, by these, beginning to satisfy his justice upon them; and sends these to arrest and seize them. He is beginning to take them by the throat, and to call upon them to pay him what they owe. Every affliction is to them but part of payment of that vast and endless sum of plagues, which God will, most severely and to the very utmost farthing, exact of them in hell.

And, so much, in answer to that query.

2. Let us now proceed to enquire *who are the Persons, with whom this Covenant of Works was at first made, and then by whom it was broken.*

(1) But, in order to a clear and distinct resolution to this, I must first premise one or two things most necessary to be known; and which I shall lay as the basis and foundation of my ensuing discourse.

[1] The first is this: that Adam may be considered under a Twofold capacity:

As a Natural Root. As a Federal Head.

In the former respect we were in him as in our original: in the latter, as in our representative.

1st. There is no difficulty at all in conceiving of Adam as our Natural Root; for that is only in regard of the traduction of the same nature to all his posterity.

As all parents are the natural root of their posterity, so Adam was of all mankind, delivering his nature to his children, which hath since been handed down along from one generation to another, even unto us.

2dly. But all the difficulty lies in opening how Adam was our Federal Head, and what it signifies to be so.

A federal head is a common representative or public person; a person, as it were dilated into many; or many persons contracted into one, appointed to stand in the stead of others: so that what he doth, as acting in that public capacity, is as valid in law to all intents and purposes, as if those, whom he represents, had in their own persons done it. This is a federal head, surety, or representative.

Now such a representative is supposed to have a power to oblige those, for whom he appears, to any agreement or compact whatsoever, as though they themselves had personally entered into it.

And this power, that one man hath to oblige and bind another, may arise two ways. From a voluntary Delegation. From a natural, or at least a legal or acquired Right, that the one hath over the other.

(1st) A Representative by Delegation is one, to whom those, whom he represents, have, by a free and joint consent, given up their own power, and invested him in it.

As, to use a known instance in the choice of a parliament, the people give away their power to those few select men whom they send; each shire to its knight, and each corporation to its burgess: so that whatsoever these few do is, in law, not only the act of those men, but of all the people in the nation: what laws or taxes soever they impose on those whom they represent, are not only from them; but, in a law sense, the people lay them upon themselves. But Adam was not thus the federal head or representative of mankind; because, having not as then received our being, we could not by a free consent choose him to transact with God for us.

(2dly) Therefore, there is in some a power to oblige others, arising merely from the Right that the one hath over the other.

And this right is twofold: either natural, upon the account of natural production; or else legal and acquired, upon the account of purchase and redemption. For both he, that begets, and he, that purchases and redeems another, hath a right over him; and, by that, may become his federal head, and bind him to all just conditions; disposing of his person and concerns, as he thinks fit and expedient. Accordingly, the whole race of mankind never had but two federal heads or general representatives; and they were the First and the Second Adam. The power, that Christ, the Second

Adam, had to represent those, for whom he undertook, was founded upon a legal and acquired right over them; as being their Redeemer, who had bought them to himself out of the hands of justice, and therefore might dispose of them as he pleased. But the power, that the First Adam had to be our representative, arose from a natural right; as being the common parent of all mankind, in whose loins we all lay, and from whom we derived our beings; and, upon that account, he might justly oblige us who owe ourselves to him, as well as himself, to what terms soever God should propound, and he accept. And the reason why we say, that Adam only was our representative or federal head, and not our other intermediate parents from whom we spring as well as from him, is not, because other parents have not the same power to covenant for and oblige their children as he had; for still they have as much natural right over those that descend from them; but, because they are not so appointed and constituted by God. Should God make a distinct and different covenant with them, they would have as much power to bind their posterity to the terms of it, as Adam had to bind all mankind to the Covenant of Works.

That is the first thing premised.

[2] Because Adam was thus our federal head, we are not to be considered as distinct from him; but, as one and the same person with him, entering into covenant with God.

As the parliament is to be considered as the same with the whole body of the people, in all things wherein they do represent them; so Adam and all mankind are to be considered as one and the same person, in all things wherein he represents us. Now our being thus one with Adam doth not denote any real physical unity or oneness: but it must be understood in *sensu forensi*, in "a judicial law sense." And this oneness with him in a law sense (which is a term frequently used, and therefore it might help us to have it expounded) signifies nothing else but that there is a real foundation laid for the law justly to reward or punish us, upon Adam's obedience or disobedience, as if we were one and the same person with him; which foundation is the right he hath over us, to oblige us to covenant-conditions.

(2) These things thus premised, which are of great moment in the Doctrine of the Covenants,

[1] Take these Two particulars:

1st. That the Covenant of Works was not made with Adam, considered in his private and personal capacity; but as a public person and a federal head: and, therefore, it was made with us as well as with him; yea, with us in him.

He was not a single person, but a whole world wrapt and folded up together in one: so that all, who have since sprung from him, are, in respect of the covenant, but one Adam unravelled and drawn out at length. What the Apostle saith of Levi, Heb. vii. 9, 10; *Levi.....payed tithes in Abraham: For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him;* I may say in this case: we all entered into covenant at the very beginning of the world; for we were then in the loins of our father Adam, when that covenant was made. So that, when we consider either Adam or ourselves with relation to this covenant, we must so mould our apprehensions, as if all we were Adam, and Adam all of us: for, though we then lay so deep hid in our causes and the small principles of our beings, yet the covenant took hold of us; and bound us, either to the obedience which Adam promised both for himself and us, or to the penalty which he exposed both himself and us unto. Yet, still, our covenanting in Adam must be understood in a law sense: for it is utterly impossible, that we should personally and actually enter into covenant before we were: but the meaning is only this, that the covenant, which God made with Adam, doth as lawfully and strongly bind us to obedience, and in case of failure to punishment, as it did him; because God made this covenant with him, considered not personally but representatively, he having a power to indent for his posterity, from the natural right he had over them as their common parent. And yet, possibly, it may be long enough disputed, without hopes of a certain resolution, whether, when God made this covenant with Adam, he then knew himself to be a public person, and to stand as the representative of all mankind. Probable it is, that, this affair being of so vast and general concernment, some such apprehensions might be impressed upon him by God, either through natural instinct or divine revelation: and, if so, the more inexcusable was his fault, that, knowing himself intrusted with no less a stock than the happiness of all his race, he should so wilfully break, and thereby ruin both himself and them.

2dly. In like manner, Adam brake this covenant, not only as considered personally, but as he was a common representative and a public person; and, therefore, not only he, but we, by eating of the forbidden fruit, sinned and fell.

We are not to look upon Adam as alone in the transgression; but we ourselves were as deep in it as he: he, indeed, by personal consent to the temptation, without which neither he nor we had sinned; but we, by a covenant or federal obligation in him, our surety and representative. Every one will readily confess, that he

hath been and still is a transgressor of the Covenant of Works; that his obedience falls infinitely short of the holiness and perfection of the Law: but, that he should transgress this covenant so many thousand years before he was born, even in the infancy of the world, that his hand should be lifted up against God in that primitive rebellion; this some deny, few understand, and fewer lament. Yet what saith the Apostle, Rom. v. ver. 12, 18, 19? In the 12th verse *By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men,* ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον, *for that all have sinned,* saith our translation; *in whom all have sinned,* saith the margin: both are right; for indeed both carry but the same sense: So v. 18; *By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation:* and, v. 19; *By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners.* But how could many be made sinners by the sin of one? It is not by Imitation only, as the Pelagians held, maintaining that Adam's sin had no more influence upon us, than the power that a bad example hath to sway that will to evil that is not necessarily confirmed in good: but this cannot be, because death is here said to reign over those, who never *sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression,* v. 14, that is, over infants, for they also die in whom the example of Adam could never work any propension to disobedience: and, certainly, were there nothing else in Adam's sin to make men sinners, but only the setting of an ill example before them, I can see no reason why the example of his penitence and after-obedience should not as effectually excite us to virtue, as that of his disobedience to sin: especially, methinks, the examples of the miseries and wretchedness, that sin hath brought both upon Adam and upon his posterity, might much more deter them, than the examples of vice, if there were no corruption in their nature, allure them. It is not therefore by example only, that mankind are made sinners through the disobedience of one; but we became sinners by his Disobedience, because in him we ourselves sinned and disobeyed; not, indeed, actually, for so we were not in him; but forensically and in a law sense, he being our representative and federal head, and God looking upon what he did as equivalent to the personal deed of all mankind: which imputation was built upon most just and righteous grounds, because Adam, being our first parent, had a natural right over us, and might bind all his posterity to the terms of any covenant, that God should be pleased to make with him, and which might have been so much to their advantage.

And thus I hope these two things are sufficiently cleared, which

are of great use and necessity to our right understanding the Doctrine of the Covenants; with whom the Covenant of Works was made, and by whom it was broken.

That many of these things are abstruse and difficult, I cannot deny; but, that any of them are vain and frivolous, I do. It is a most ignorant and weak excuse of many, who perhaps may be well-meaning people, that these things are too high speculations for them to search into; that their eternal salvation may be secured well enough, though they know not such obscure points as these are, so long as they conscientiously practise those obvious truths and express duties which they know. I will not, I dare not deny, but men may be safe in not knowing what they cannot attain. But, if they pretend this for a shelter of slothful and affected ignorance, let them consider, that many of the great and precious truths of the Gospel are delivered obscurely; not to excuse us from, but on purpose to engage us a diligent search and study of them. If these things were not expedient to be known, why should the Holy Scripture so abound with them? The Epistles of St. Paul are full of these profound mysteries, which he wrote to the Churches in common, and every member of them: these were read in public assemblies; and it concerned all the people to hearken to them, and consider of them: and, if the pressing only of practical duties of Christianity had been sufficient, most part of the Apostle's writings had been needless and superfluous. It is true, we cannot determine what is the *minimum quod sic*, that is consistent with salvation; what is "the least degree," either of grace or knowledge, that may just serve to bring a man to heaven: but this we may say, that it is a very ill sign, to drive the bargain so hard with God; to desire to be saved, at the least charges and expenses possible. This I will boldly say, that he, who despiseth a more high and elevated knowledge of the mysteries of Christianity, where the means to attain it are offered, though others who are destitute of those means may arrive at heaven and happiness, yet I must needs doubt whether ever he shall. To despise evangelical truths, which do not so immediately tend to practice, is no other than to impute trivialness to the infinite wisdom of God, who hath revealed them, and so often and largely insisted on them; and to withdraw the chiefest part of ourselves, whereby we most of all show ourselves to be men, from his obedience, even our understandings. Certainly, we serve God as well by endeavouring to know his truth, as by endeavouring to obey his commands; and he, who resolves to obey God bidding do this, but not when he bids him understand this, serves him more like an engine, than like a man.

[2] From this, that hath been spoken, we may borrow some light to discover to us the manner how we are all become partakers of Original Sin, through the violation of the first Covenant of Works.

Many are the disputes and great the difficulties about this matter. Very much is said and written upon this subject, to very little purpose; unless it be to show us, how miserable the blindness and ignorance of human nature is, which this sin hath brought upon us. It would be a labour, as fruitless as endless, to reckon up to you the great variety of opinions herein. No one point of divinity hath been more discussed and controverted than this; and, yet, if I may be allowed so to judge, all, that ever I have yet seen, hath either been false in the hypothesis, or failed in the accommodation. Some deny the imputation of guilt, and some the corruption of nature; and, because they cannot comprehend the way and manner of its conveyance, destroy original sin itself. Others, that grant both, yet puzzle themselves and their readers with strange assertions: some holding that the soul is propagated from the parents even as the body is, and therefore no wonder that a defiled soul should beget another such: others, who hold the souls of men to be immediately created by God, affirm that it contracts pollution by being infused into a polluted body. But, yet, the absurdities, that will follow upon all these ways are so many, so very gross and palpable, and such hypotheses, instead of satisfying, must needs only disquiet and torment an inquisitive mind. And yet, if, after all these differences and disputes, the certainty of the truth in this matter could be evidenced, it would more than recompense the pains of all, and the errors of many who have attempted it: for, though it be certain that niceties in religion are not necessities; yet, if ever difficulty and usefulness were conjoined together in any one point, it is in this of Original Sin. I intend not to handle the question at large; but only briefly speak to it, as a deduction and corollary from this Doctrine of the Covenants.

To enter into it, I must first premise a Distinction or two concerning Original Sin; and then lay down some Positions, from which it may be cleared to you, that the true gound of our partaking of it is only the Covenant of Works.

1st. Original Sin therefore is twofold. The Imputation of Guilt. The Inhension of Corruption.

(1st) There is an Imputation of Guilt.

To impute guilt, is, to reckon a person a transgressor of the Law; and therefore liable to the punishment threatened, whether he hath in his own person transgressed the Law or not. And here lies a

great part of the difficulty, how we can become guilty of another man's transgression, which we never acted in nor consented unto, and which was committed some thousands of years before we were born: and yet we shall be punished for it; and that, as justly, as if we had in our own persons committed it.

(2dly) Besides this imputation of guilt, there is in original sin an Inherent Corruption of Nature.

The former is by the Schools called *peccatum originans;* and this *peccatum originatum:* barbarously indeed, but yet significantly.

Inherent Corruption of Nature is commonly made to consist of two parts.

[1st] The loss and privation of the image of God: the clarity of our understandings, the obedience of our wills, the order of our affections, the perfect harmony of the whole man in the subjection of his inferior faculties to his superior and all unto God, being utterly lost and renounced; so that now we are become both unable and averse to every thing that is good.

[2dly] Besides this, it is commonly affirmed, that there is some positive malignant quality in original sin, *viz.*, a violent propension and strong bent of the whole man unto what is evil and sinful.

The former is called the Privative, this latter the Positive part of Original Sin.

Yet I think, if it be well weighed, as there may be insuperable difficulties in admitting such a positive corruption in our frame and composition, so there is not any necessity to grant it. We need not, I say, superadd any positive corruption in original sin, to the privation of original righteousness: for a mere privation of rectitude in an active subject, will sufficiently solve all those phænomena for which a positive corruption is pleaded. We shall find man's nature wicked enough by his fall, though there were no evil principles infused into him (for from whence should they come?) but only holiness and righteousness taken from him: for, the soul being a busy creature, act it must and will: without grace and the image of God adorning and assisting it, it cannot act regularly, nor holily: its nature makes it active: the loss of God's image, which alone can raise the soul to act spiritually, makes all its actions defective: and this alone is sufficient to make all its actions corrupt and sinful, without admitting any positive corruption. There needs no more to make a man halt, that must walk; but to lame him: and, certainly, he, that doth lame him, doth it, not by infusing into him any habit or principle of lameness, but only by destroying that strength and power which before he had. So stands the case here! we are all lamed by the fall we took in Adam: our natures are

despoiled of their primitive integrity and perfection, so that there needs not any positive vicious habit implanted in our original, to make our actions vicious and irregular; but, it is sufficient, that we have lost those holy habits and principles of righteousness and knowledge, which we were at first endowed with, and which alone, could direct every action *in ordine ad Deum*, as the Schools speak, "with a reference to God," and his honour and glory.

Thus then you see, Original Sin may be either the Guilt of the First Transgression imputed to us, or the Corruption of Nature inherent in us: to which corruption nothing more is required, than the loss of God's image in an active subject.

2dly. It remains now to open, how this Imputation lies upon us, and this Corruption cleaves unto us, merely upon the account of the Covenant of Works; whereby we may clearly understand how it is, that we become Partakers of Original Sin.

This I shall endeavour to do as to both branches.

(1st) As to the Imputation of Adam's Sin to us, take these Two particulars; which will explain how Original Sin, as to the Guilt of it, lies upon us.

[1st] If Adam had not been our federal head, if the covenant had not been made with us in him but had respected him alone: yet his sin might have been justly so far imputed to us, as to subject us to Temporal Evils and Punishments; because of that relation which we bear unto him as our Natural Head, and the common root from whence we all sprang.

And the reason of this is, because God might justly have punished the transgression of Adam, in all his concerns, and in whatsoever was dear unto him; as his posterity would have been. So that, to us, these evils would have been only a *simplex cruciatus*, "only painful," because inflicted without any respect to our own sin; but, to Adam, they had been penal, and properly punishments. This I think may be made good by many places of Scripture, where God is set forth as punishing some for the sins of others, who were not their federal heads: Exod. xx. 5; *Visiting the* iniquities *of the fathers upon the children.* Isa. xiv. 20, 21. *The seed of evil-doers shall never be renowned. Prepare slaughter for his children, for the iniquity of their fathers:* and so, for the sin of David, seventy thousand of his subjects are slain: and yet those fathers were not the representatives of their children, neither was David of his subjects. But God might justly thus punish them in their relations: for a father is punished, in the evils that befal his children; and a king, in those that befal his subjects: and, though it be true that

they have evil enough of their own, to deserve these, yea and greater plagues; yet, if they should be supposed to be innocent and without sin, God might justly thus afflict them, not indeed as punishing them, but those that sinned, they being made only the passive conveyers of those punishments to them. I remember Plutarch gave this reason, in his treatise "Of those who are Late Punished," why it may be just to revenge the fathers' offences upon the children: ουθεν δεινον, saith he, ουδ' ατοπον αν εκεινων οντες εχωσι τα εκεινων. "It is nothing strange nor absurd, that, since they belong to them, they should suffer what belongs to them." So, then, though we had never sinned in Adam, nor the covenant made with him had ever reached us; yet God might justly have brought temporal evils upon us, because of the relation we bear unto him, as our natural head, and as we are parts of him.

[2dly] That Adam's sin is imputed unto us, so far as thereby to make us liable to Eternal Death and Damnation, results not from his being our natural, but our Federal Head.

Adam's sin is imputed to our condemnation, only because we covenanted in him, and not merely because we descended from him. It is an everlasting truth, Ezek. xviii. 20; *The soul, that sinneth, it shall die:* and, *The son shall not bear the iniquity of* his *Father,* that is, the punishment of his father's iniquity. So, Gal. vi. 5; *Every man shall bear his own burden.* These expressions cannot be meant of temporal sufferings; for I have already showed, that God may and doth inflict them upon children, for the parents' sins: but they are meant of future punishments and eternal death; that none shall eternally perish for his father's crimes, but only for his own. "But," you will say, "how then comes it to pass, that we are liable to eternal death through the sin of another, if so be *the son shall not bear the iniquity of* his *father,* and only *the soul, that sinneth, shall die?*" I answer: This is still true, because we are the souls that sinned; we, in Adam, who then rose up our representative, in whom we covenanted with God, and in whom we brake that covenant: and therefore God inflicts death eternal upon his posterity, not as a punishment for his sin, but for their own; for his sin was theirs, though not committed personally by them, yet legally and judicially charged upon them. The grounds of this I have before mentioned, and therefore shall spare to enlarge upon it here: only take the sum and abstract of it, in brief, thus: God was, at first, willing of free grace to enter into covenant with Adam; that, if he would obey, he should live; if he would disobey, he should die the death: but, lest this grace should be too narrow and stinted, if it had been

limited to Adam's own person only, therefore God extends it to all mankind, and bids Adam stand forth as the representative and surety of all his posterity, and indent for them as well as for himself; which he might justly do, being the common parent of mankind, and therefore having a natural right to dispose of them, especially when in all appearance and probability it would have proved so incomparably to their advantage: he therefore disobeying, the death threatened is as much due to us, as to him; it being, in law, not only his act, but ours. And this is plainly the manner how we, who live so many thousand years after, are made liable to death by the first transgression. And, therefore, Alvarez de Auxil. d. 44. n. 5, saith well, "*Proprie loquendo omnes filii Adæ peccaverunt originaliter in eo instanti, in quo Adam peccavit actualiter:* that is, All the children of Adam are not only then guilty of original sin when they are first conceived or born, but "properly they sinned originally in the same instant, in which Adam sinned actually" by eating the forbidden fruit; because they were then in Adam as in their representative, and upon that account his transgression was legally theirs.

And thus, I hope, I have made it clear, that, as for that part of Original Sin which consists in the Imputation of the guilt of the First Transgression, it lies upon us merely from the Covenant of Works, into which we entered with God in Adam.

(2dly) There is another branch of Original Sin, which consists in the Corruption of our Natures, through the Loss of the Image of God. This also had never seized on us, but by the Covenant of Works.

Many perplexed disputes there are, how we became so totally depraved, and whence we derived that corruption. I shall, as clearly as I can, lay open to you the true and genuine grounds of it; which, in general, I affirm to be the violation of the Covenant of Works.

To make this evident, consider these Three particulars.

[1st] It must again be remembered, that the loss of God's image, that is, of all that grace and holiness wherewith our natures were primitively endowed, is the true and only ground of all original corruption and depravation.

Men's natures are not now become sinful, by putting anything into them to defile them; but by taking something from them, which should have preserved them holy. We have nothing more in us by nature, than Adam had in innocency: and, if it be said we have corruption in us by nature, which he had not, that is not to have more, but less. He had the free power of obedience: he had

the perfect image of his Maker, in all the divine qualities of knowledge and holiness, which we have not, and are therefore said to be corrupt; not as though there were in our original any real positive qualities which were not in Adam, but because he had those holy qualities which were not in us. And, therefore, when we say that Adam communicated to his posterity a corrupted nature, it must not be understood as if that nature which we receive were infected with any vicious inclinations or habits, which should sway and determine our wills unto evil; but the meaning is, that Adam communicated to us a nature, which hath a power to incline and act variously: but, withal, he did not communicate to us the image of God, nor the power of obedience, which should make all its inclinations and actions holy and regular; and, therefore, he communicated a nature corrupted, because it was deprived of that grace which should have kept it from sin. That is the First particular.

[2dly] The loss of this image of God was part of that death threatened in the Covenant of Works; *In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;* that is, thou shalt die a spiritual death, as well as a temporal and eternal death.

And this spiritual death was the very despoiling him of the image of God, and the habits and principles of holiness: so that corruption of nature seized upon Adam through the curse of the covenant; God taking from him his image, and thereby executing upon him this spiritual death literally, even in the very day wherein he transgressed.

[3dly] Adam being our federal head, and we disobeying in him, God doth justly deprive us of this image; that thereby also he might execute upon us the spiritual death threatened in the Covenant of Works, which covenant we brake in our representative.

And this I take to be the true account of the corruption of our nanature. It is a curse threatened in the covenant, to those, that shall disobey; and inflicted upon us, because we were those, that did disobey, in Adam our federal head. We have our beings delivered down to us: but that grace, which should have enabled us to act without sin, is lost, because the Covenant of Works threatened it should be lost upon the first transgression. And, indeed, this loss of God's image was the only death, that was immediately upon the Fall inflicted: God did not presently bring either temporal or eternal death upon sinful Adam; but he instantly brought spiritual death upon him, as judging him, who had a will to disobey, unworthy any longer to enjoy a power to obey, nor would he have his image profaned by being worn by a rebel and a malefactor.

And thus I have stated and answered that great and much controverted question; and think it to be the clear, yea indeed the only satisfactory way to resolve how we are become originally sinners, both by the Imputation of Guilt, and Corruption of Nature.

[3] And, yet, to add some more light and confirmation to this, Two particulars more are considerable.

1st. Most probable it is, that, though Adam had sinned, yet by that one act of disobedience he would not utterly have lost the image of God, had it not been taken away from him according to the terms of the Covenant of Works. It was rather forfeited by law, than destroyed by the contrariety of sin.

So that, it is only upon the account of the covenant, that both his nature and the nature of his posterity were corrupted by that first transgression. For it is very hard to conceive how Adam's sin, which was but one transient act, should formally eat out and destroy the innate habit of grace in him; and therefore it did it, meritoriously and federally. All grace depends necessarily upon the influence of the Spirit of God, both to preserve and to actuate it; and sin provoked God to withdraw that influence, according as he had threatened to do: and, hence it came to pass, that Adam's grace decayed and perished, at once; and left him nothing but mere nature, despoiled of those divine habits and principles, with which it was before endowed.

2dly. Though Adam had lost God's image himself, yet, if he had not been our federal head and representative, I can see no reason but that we should have been created with the perfection of that image upon us, notwithstanding his sin and transgression.

And, therefore, it is not merely our being born of sinful Adam nor of sinful parents, that must be assigned as the true and principal cause, why our natures are corrupted; but because we are born of that sinful Adam, who was our federal head, in whom we covenanted, and in whom ourselves sinned and transgressed. Not our birth from him, but our sinning in him, derives corruption upon us. Though he had corrupted himself, yet, if he had not been a public person, his corruption had not infected our nature; any more than the sins of intermediate parents do the natures of those, who descend from them. Nor doth Job contradict this, when he asks, chap. xiv. ver. 4; *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?* for there he shows the impossibility of it, as the case now stands; not, how it might and would have been, if the whole mass had not been federally corrupted in Adam. And, he, who seriously considers the most pure and immaculate conception of

our Blessed Saviour, will be convinced of the truth of this: for though he descended from Adam as a natural root, yet he descended not from him as a federal head; the Covenant of Works reaching only unto those, who were to be his ordinary and common offspring: and, therefore, though he partook of his nature; yet he did not partake of his guilt and corruption.

And thus I have, as I could, stated this much disputed and very difficult point of our partaking of Original Sin, both as to the Imputation of the Guilt of it, and the Corruption of our Nature by it; and have resolved all into the Covenant of Works, into which we entered with God, in our first father and common representative. The Guilt of the primitive transgression lies upon us, because we both covenanted, and brake that Covenant in him; so that his sin is legally become ours: the corruption of Nature, through the Loss of God's Image, cleaveth unto us, because this was part of the punishment contained in the death threatened against those, that should violate and break that Covenant.

3. Here then let us, *with a silent awe upon our souls, tremble at the hidden depths of God's justice.*

It is the hardest task in the world, to bring carnal reason to submit to and approve of the equitableness of God's proceedings against us for the sin of Adam.

"Is there any shadow of reason, that I should be condemned for the sin of another, which I never abetted, never consented to, never knew of? a sin, which was committed so many hundreds of ages before ever I was born? If God be resolved I shall perish, why doth he thus seem to circumvent me? why doth he use such ambages and captious circumstances of indicting me for Adam's sin, which I never entered into? Were it not far more plain dealing, more direct proceeding, to cast me into hell, and to justify it by the mere arbitrariness of his will, and the irresistibleness of his power? Who can oppose the one, or prevail against the other? But to implead me before justice, and to urge equity in condemning me by a law made on purpose to ensnare me, seems only the contrivance of an almighty cruelty; which yet might be safe enough in its own force, without any such pretexts and artifices."

Let every such blasphemous mouth be stopped, and all flesh become guilty before the Lord. Tell me, thou, who thus disputest against God's equity, and complainest of his severity in this particular, tell me, wouldst thou have been content, or thought thyself well dealt with, to have been left out of the Covenant of Works, and by name excepted, if Adam had continued in his

integrity? and, when all others of mankind for whom he engaged had been crowned with life and happiness, that thou alone shouldst have no share in their blessedness, no title to it, no plea for it, it being due only upon a covenant-stipulation? Wouldst not thou have thought that God had dealt very hardly with thee, to omit, to except thee only, for want of thy express consent? so that, though thou hadst obeyed, yet life should not have been due to thee, nor couldst thou have had any plea for it. For I have heretofore showed you, that, if God had not entered into this Covenant with Adam, though he had observed all that God commanded him, yet he could not challenge life and happiness as a debt due to his obedience. And, indeed, was God severe in threatening death to the transgressors of his Law, when yet he promised life to those who observed it, which life he was not bound to bestow; and deposited this in the hands of one, who might as easily have kept as lost it, and whose interest did infinitely oblige him to a punctual observance? What more equitable, what more reasonable terms could be offered than these, or more favourable to all mankind? Was this severity? Was this a design to entrap or ensnare us? Wouldst not thou thyself, hadst thou then lived, have consented to this transaction; and have infinitely blessed God, for the mercy of the condescension in making such a covenant, whereby, if man should prove any other than a vast gainer by it, it must be through the mere fault of his own will? Again, to vindicate the righteousness of God in involving us in the guilt of the First Adam, consider, Do you not think it is just with God, to save your souls from everlasting condemnation, through the merits of the Second Adam, Jesus Christ, imputed unto you? and shall it not then be as just with God, to account you liable and obnoxious to it, through the sin of the First Adam, imputed to you? if the one be just because of the covenant made between God the Father and our Blessed Saviour, this likewise is just because of the covenant made between Adam and God: you gave no more consent to that, than to this; and Adam had as much power to appear and undertake for you upon the account of production, as Christ had upon the account of redemption: only, such is the partiality of our self-love, that we are ready to think that God is only then just, when he is merciful; and we reckon his dealings with us equal, not by the strict measures of justice, but by our own successes, interests, and advantages.

Let this, therefore, be an apology for God, to vindicate his proceedings with us upon the account of Adam's transgression. I had

not so largely insisted on it, but that there are secret heart-risings in the very best, against the righteousness of God, in this particular. Flesh and blood can hardly brook it; and, when it hath nothing left to reply, yet still it will be murmuring and rebelling against this truth. When the mouth of carnal reason is stopped, yet then it will vent itself in carnal repinings. But it becomes us to lay our hand upon this mouth also, and to give God the glory of his justice; acknowledging it is most righteous, that we should be actually and personally wretched, who were federally disobedient and rebellious.

4. *Many nice questions might be here propounded;* but because they are so, I shall only propound them.

As: if Adam had continued in innocence for some certain time, whether God would have so confirmed him in grace as he hath done the holy angels, that he should infallibly have persevered in his original state. Whether, though Adam had stood, his posterity might have sinned and fallen. Whether, upon their fall, their posterity had been guilty of original sin. Whether, if Adam had stood some years in innocence, and afterwards had sinned, his children born before his fall had been involved in it. Whether, if Eve only had transgressed, and not Adam by her persuasion, mankind had thereby been originally sinful. But these things, being rather curious than necessary speculations, which are not revealed to us in the Scriptures, I look upon it, as an unprofitable, so a bold and rash undertaking, positively to determine what might have been in such cases; and think it safest and most satisfactory, to acquiesce in sober and modest enquiries.

5. I shall, therefore, add no more for the Doctrinal part of this Covenant of Works, but shall close it up with some *Practical Application.*

(1) Is it the tenor of the Covenant of Works, that the man, which doth those things that the Law requires, he only shall live by them? This then may be for conviction to all the world.

It is a doctrine, that will strike through all self-justiciaries, that trust to their own works and righteousness to save them. Let the Scripture tell them never so often, that there is none righteous, no not one; that all have sinned and are fallen short of the glory of God: let God offer Christ unto them; Christ offer himself, his righteousness, his sufferings, his obedience, and a life ready purchased to their hands: yet still they retreat; and appeal from him, to the works and righteousness of the Law, for Justification.

Well, then, to the Law they shall go. And, by Three Demon-

strations, I shall convince men, that it is utterly impossible for them to be justified by the Law, or according to the terms of a Covenant of Works.

[1] It is utterly impossible for them to act answerably to the exact strictness and holiness of the Law; and, if they fail in the least jot, read but that terrible sentence pronounced against them. Gal. iii. 10. *Cursed is every one, that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the Law, to do them.* This is the tenor of the Law.

And dare you now maintain your plea, and bring it to an issue with God? What can you produce, that may justify you according to this sentence? Perhaps, among many thousand works of Darkness and of the Devil, may stand up a few shattered prayers, a few faint wishes, a few pious resolutions; but the prayers heartless, the wishes ineffectual, and the resolutions abortive. Is this the righteousness of the Law, which Moses describes? Is heaven grown so cheap, as to be set to sale for this? If you depend upon your works for life, bring forth an angelical perfection. Can you tell God, that you never had a thought in you, that stepped awry? not an imagination, tainted with any the least vanity, impertinency, frivolousness, not to say uncleanness, malice, blasphemy, and atheism? Can you say, that you never uttered a word that so much as lisped contrary to the Law? that you never did an action, which innocence itself might not own? If not, as certainly there is no man that liveth and sinneth not, you can expect nothing but condemnation according to the sentence of the Law, and the tenor of the Covenant of Works, which thunders forth the curse against every transgressor.

[2] It is alike utterly impossible for you to make any satisfaction to justice for the violation of the Law.

Thy own conscience, that tells thee thou hast sinned, summons thee before the great and righteous Judge, who demands full satisfaction for the violation of his laws, and thy offences committed against him. Suffering cannot satisfy, unless it be in thy eternal damnation: and all, that thou canst do, will not satisfy; for all, that thou canst do, is but thy duty however. And yet, without a full personal satisfaction, thou canst expect no salvation, according to the Covenant of Works. Yet, farther,

[3] Could you perfectly obey, and in your own persons meritoriously suffer, yet still there would be a flaw in your title; for still there would be original sin, which would keep you from obtaining a legal righteousness.

It is true, the Law saith, *Do this, and live;* but to whom doth it

speak? not to fallen, but to innocent, upright man. It is not only a *Do this* can save you; but the Law requires a "Be this," too. Now can you pluck down the old building, and cast out all the ruins and rubbish? Can you, in the very casting and moulding of your beings, instamp upon them the image of God's purity and holiness? If these impossibilites maybe achieved, then Justification by a covenant of Works were not a thing altogether desperate. But, whilst we have original corruption, which will cause defects in our obedience; whilst we have defects in our obedience, which will expose us to divine justice; whilst we are utterly unable to satisfy that justice; so long we may conclude it altogether impossible to be justified by a Covenant of Works. Instead of finding life by it, we shall meet with nothing but death and the curse.

(2) This, therefore, might endear to us the unspeakable love of God, in the inestimable gift of his Son Jesus Christ; by whom both this Covenant is fulfilled, and a better ratified for us. Either obligation of the Law was too much for us: we could neither obey, nor suffer: but he hath performed both; fulfilling the precept, and conquering the penalty; and both, by a free and gracious imputation, are reckoned to our Justification, and the obtaining of eternal life.

(3) This declares the desperate and remediless estate of those who, by unbelief, refuse Jesus Christ, and the redemption he hath purchased: for they are still under the Covenant of Works; and shall have sentence pass upon them, according to the tenor of that covenant.

There are but two covenants between God and man. The one saith, *Do this and live:* the other saith, *Believe, and live.* Men are left to their own choice, to which they will apply. If they refuse the conditions of the latter, they must perform the conditions of the former, or else perish eternally. Now every unbeliever doth actually thrust Christ from him; and reject that great salvation which he hath purchased: they will not have him to be their Lord and Saviour: and therefore God will certainly judge every such wretch, according to the strictest terms of the Covenant of Works; and then woe, everlasting woe unto him. For every the least transgression of the least tittle of the Law will certainly, as God's threatenings are true, be punished with eternal death. And how many deaths and hells then must be put together, and crowded into one, to make up a just and fearful reward for him, who, scorning the way of salvation by believing, shall put himself upon his trial by the Covenant of Works! Whither will such an one fly? what will be his refuge? Plead his innocence, he cannot: conscience will take

him by the throat, and tell him loudly he lies. Plead the righteousness and satisfaction of Jesus Christ, he cannot: he scorned it, he rejected it; and, therefore, cannot expect it should ever appear for him, or avail him. There is no hope, no remedy for such a wretch; but, being thus cast and condemned by Law, he must for ever lie under the revenges of that wrath, which it is impossible for him either to bear or to evade.

And, thus much, concerning the Covenant of Works.

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II. Let us now proceed to consider and treat of the COVENANT OF GRACE: the sum and tenor of which is delivered to us from the 6th to the 10th verse.

This Covenant of Grace is propounded to us, upon a supposed impossibility of obtaining Righteousness and Justification according to the terms of the Covenant of Works.

And, lest it might seem as impossible to be justified by this Covenant, the Apostle removes the two great objections, that lie in the way.

For, it may be argued, That the abode and residence of Christ, the Son of God, who is to work out this righteousness for us, is in the highest heavens; and how then shall he be brought down to earth, to fulfil the Law in our stead?

To this the Apostle answers: *Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down from above.* That care is already taken; and God, the Eternal Son, hath left those glorious mansions, to shroud and eclipse himself in our vile flesh. He was born of a woman, and made subject to the Law, and hath wrought out all righteousness for us; that, through his obedience sinners might be pardoned and justified.

But then, again, it might be objected, That whosoever will appear to be our Surety, must not only yield perfect obedience to the Law of God, but pay down his life to the justice of God for our offences: and, if Christ thus die for us, how can he then appear before God in our behalf, to plead our cause, to justify and acquit us? We cannot be justified unless Christ die; neither can we be justified by a dead Christ: and who is there, that can raise this crucified and murdered Saviour to life again, that we might obtain righteousness by him?

To this also the Apostle answers: *Say not in thine heart.... Who shall descend into the deep?* that is, into the grave, where his body lay entombed; or into Hades, the place and receptacle of separate souls: or, if you will, into both these depths; into Hades, to bring

back the soul of Christ to his body; and into the grave, to raise his body with his soul, and to rescue him from the power of death and corruption. That work is already done. He hath, by his Al mighty Spirit and Godhead, broken asunder the bands of death, and the bars of the grave: it being impossible that he should be holden of it; and that, having discharged the debt, he should any longer lie under arrest and confinement.

And thus the Apostle, as I conceive, answers these two objections against the possibility of our being justified by Christ, according to the terms of the Covenant of Grace, taken from the grand improbability both of his incarnation and resurrection: how, being God, he should descend from heaven, and become man; and how, being man, he should ascend out of the grave, and become a fit Mediator between God and Men. And, therefore, both these being done, though the righteousness of the Law be impossible, yet you need not despair of a righteousness: the matter of your Justification is already wrought out: Christ, by his incarnation, hath subjected himself to all obedience both of the precept and penalty of the Covenant of Works; and, by his resurrection and intercession, will take care to secure the application of his merits and righteousness unto you.

These two objections being thus removed, the Apostle proceeds on, in the 8th and 9th verses, to give us the sum and tenor of the Covenant of Grace.

*What saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart:* (expressions borrowed from Moses concerning the delivery of his Law: Deut. xxx. 12, 14, which the Apostle applies here to the Gospel of Christ) and tells us, that *the word of faith, which we preach,* is, *that, if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe* with *thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.* As if the Apostle should have said: "God requires no impossible thing for thy salvation. He doth not bid thee pluck Christ from heaven, and thrust him into a body. He doth not bid thee descend into the bowels of the earth, and there rescue Christ from the power of the grave. These are not within the compass of thy ability; nor doth God require for thy Justification and Salvation anything, that is impossible to be done. No: but *the word of* Righteousness *which we preach,* that is, the manner of obtaining righteousness which we exhibit in the Gospel, is no other than what lieth in the heart and in the mouth. Thou needest not go up to heaven, to bring Christ down from thence; nor down to the grave, to raise him from the dead: these things are

already done; and thou needest go no farther than thy heart and thy mouth for salvation. God hath placed the conditions of it in them: that, if thou believest on Christ in thy heart, and if thou confessest him with thy mouth, thou shalt be saved."

This I suppose is the clear scope and intent of the Apostle in these verses. Yet here we must take notice,

First. That, though the Apostle seem here to make the believing that Christ is raised from the dead to be a true, saving, and justifying faith; yet it must not be so understood, as if only a dogmatical belief of this proposition, That Christ is risen from the dead, were faith sufficient to justify us: but, as it is common in Holy Scripture, by mentioning one principal object of faith to mean the whole extent of it; so, here, though only the resurrection of Christ be mentioned, yet all his merits and righteousness are intended, which, by virtue of his being raised from the dead, may by faith be effectually applied unto the soul. So that, "If thou believest that Christ is raised from the dead," is no other, than "If thou believest on Christ, who is raised from the dead." And so the Apostle himself expounds it, v. 11; *Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.* For saving faith is not only a mere assent to any proposition concerning Christ, whether it be his deity, his incarnation, his death, his resurrection, or the like; for, so, *the devils believe and tremble,* and many thousand wicked Christians do believe that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead, and all the other articles of their creed; but yet, this speculative faith, being overborne by their impious and unholy practices, will not at all avail to their Justification: but, if thou so believest that Christ is risen from the dead, that this thy faith hath an effectual influence to raise thee from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, thou shalt be saved.

Secondly. What the Apostle speaks here, of confessing Christ with our mouths, must not be restrained only to a verbal confession of him; but it comprehends, likewise, our glorifying him by the whole course of our professed obedience and subjection to him.

So that, in these two, is comprehended the whole sum of Christian Religion; faith, and obedience; the inward affections of the heart, and the outward actions of the life.

In brief, all, that here the Apostle speaks, falls into this, "If thou wilt believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and if thou wilt sincerely obey him, thou shalt be saved:" and this he gives as the sum and tenor of the righteousness of faith, and the Covenant of Grace.

i. That we may aright conceive of the Covenant of Grace from the very first ground and foundation of it, I shall LEAD YOU THROUGH THESE FOLLOWING POSITIONS.

1. God having, in his eternal decree of permitting it, foreseen the fall of man, and thereby the breach and violation of the Covenant of Works, graciously resolved not to proceed against all mankind according to the demerits of their transgression, in the execution of that death upon them which the covenant threatened; but *to propound Another Covenant unto them upon Better Terms,* which whosoever would perform, should obtain life thereby. Purposing, likewise, by his grace and Spirit so effectually to work upon the hearts of some, that they should certainly perform the conditions of this Second Covenant, and thereby obtain everlasting life.

God would have some of all those creatures, whom he made capable of enjoying him, to be brought to that most blessed and happy fruition. All angels did not fall, but multitudes of them kept their first estate and glory: and, therefore, as some think, God never found out a means to reconcile those that fell. But all mankind at once sinned, and fell short of the glory of God; and, therefore, lest they should all perish, and a whole species of rational creatures, who were made fit to behold and enjoy him in glory, should for ever be cut off from his presence and the beatific vision; he resolves, that, as the fall of all was by the terms of one covenant, so the restoring of some should be by and according to the terms of another. And, thus, in reference to this eternal purpose, the Apostle calls it *eternal life,* which was *promised before the world began:* Tit. i. 2. And also, 2 Tim. i. 9; he speaks of the *purpose* and *grace* of God, *which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began.*

Now in this design of entering into another covenant, besides the restoring of fallen man, God the Father intended the glorifying of himself and his Son Jesus Christ.

(1) He intended to glorify himself: his manifold Wisdom and unsearchable Counsel: in finding out a means, to reconcile justice and mercy, to punish the sin and yet to pardon the sinner: his Righteousness; in the remission of sins through the propitiation of Christ, Rom. iii. 25. *God hath set* him *forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood; to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins:* and, likewise, his rich and abundant Grace; in giving his Son to die for rebels; to make him a curse, that we might receive the blessing; and to make him sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God through him.

(2) By the Covenant of Grace the glory of Christ Jesus was also designed; God appointing him to be the Mediator of this new covenant; and thereby giving a glorious occasion to demonstrate the

riches of his free Love, in subjecting his life to such a death, and his glory to such a shame; and all to purchase such vile and worthless creatures as we are, and to redeem us from eternal woe and misery: to exalt likewise the glory of his Almighty Power; in supporting the human nature under the vast load of the wrath of God and the curse of the law: the glory of his uncontrolable Sovereignty, in voluntarily laying down his life and taking it up again; of his complete and all-sufficient Sacrifice, in fully perfecting all those who are sanctified; of his effectual Intercession, in the gifts and graces of his Holy Spirit impetrated thereby.

These may be some of the reasons, why, after the foresight of the breach of the Covenant of Works, God purposed from all eternity to establish another and a better covenant with mankind.

2. Upon this purpose of God to abrogate the Covenant of Works, that it should no longer be the standing rule according to which he would proceed with all mankind, *there came in the room and stead thereof a Twofold Covenant.*

*A Covenant of Redemption. A Covenant of Reconciliation.*

The Covenant of Redemption was everlasting, from before all time; made only between God the Father and Jesus Christ.

The Covenant of Reconciliation was temporal; made between God and Men through Christ, and took place immediately after the Fall: of which the first exhibition was that promise, that the seed of the woman should break the serpent's head.

The Covenant of Redemption, or of the Mediatorship, was made only between the Father and the Son, before the foundations of the world were laid. And, though it was entirely for man's infinite benefit and advantage, yet he was taken into it as a party. The form of this eternal covenant we have, at large expressed, Isa. liii. from the 10th verse to the end: *When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days.....He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.....He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death.....*and, *by his knowledge*, i. e. by the knowledge and faith of him, he shall *justify many.* All which is spoken of the reward, which God would give unto Christ, for his great and arduous undertaking of the redemption of fallen mankind.

From this Covenant of Redemption do flow,

(1) Many of those Relations, wherein God the Father and the Son do stand mutually engaged each to other, which are founded upon Christ's undertaking our redemption.

As, from this eternal covenant it is, that Christ Jesus is related

unto God, as a Surety to a Creditor: and, therefore, Heb. vii. 22. He is called *the Surety of a better testament.* Hence, likewise, he bears the relation of an Advocate to a Judge: 1 John ii. 1; *We have an Advocate with the Father.* Hence also, ariseth the relation of a Servant to his Lord and Master: Isa. xlii. 1; *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold:* and, again, *It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my Servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob* only.....*I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth:* Isa. xlix. 6: and so, again, Christ is called God's *Servant, The Branch:* Zech. iii. 8. Hence, likewise, it is, that, although Christ, considered essentially as God, be equal in glory and dignity, yea the same with the Father, John x. 30; *I and my Father are one;* yet, because he entered into this Covenant of Redemption, engaging himself to be a mediator and his Father's servant, in accomplishing the salvation of his elect, therefore he may be said to be Inferior to the Father. In which sense, he himself tells us, John xiv. 28; *My Father is greater than I.* It is no contradiction, for Christ to be equal with God, and yet inferior to the Father. Consider him personally, as the Eternal Son of God, and the Second Hypostasis in the Ever-Blessed Trinity; so, *he thought it* no *robbery to be equal with God:* Phil. ii. 6. Consider him federally, as bound by this Covenant of Redemption to serve God, by *bringing many sons unto glory;* so, he thought it no debasement to be inferior unto God. And, therefore, whatsoever you meet with in Scripture, implying any inequality and disproportion between God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, must still be understood with reference to this Covenant of Redemption. For, essentially, they are one and the same God: personally, they differ in order and original: but, immediately, they differ in authority and subjection, and all the economy of man's salvation, designed by the one and accomplished by the other.

(2) From this Covenant of Redemption flows the mutual Stipulation or Agreement between the Father and the Son, upon terms and conditions concerning man's salvation; or rather, indeed, it formally consists in it.

Christ was originally free; and no way obliged to undertake this great and hard service, of reconciling God and man together. He well knew what it would cost him to perform it; all the contempt and reproach, the agonies and conflict, the bitter pains and cruel torments, which he must suffer to accomplish it. And, though the deity was secure in its own impassibility; yet he knew that the strict union between his human nature and divine would, by a com-

munication of properties, make it the humiliation and abasement of God, the sufferings and the blood of God. And, therefore, God the Father makes Christ many promises, that, if he would undertake this work, he should *see his seed, prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord* should *prosper in his hand:* as in the forecited Isa. liii: yea, that all principality and dominion, both in heaven and earth, should be consigned over unto him; and that he should be the Head, King, and Governor, both of his Church and of the whole World. And, therefore, when he had fulfilled and accomplished this great work, he tells his disciples, Matt. xxviii. 18; *All power is given unto me,* both *in heaven and in earth;* and, Eph. i. 20, 21, 22, the Father *set* Christ *at his own right hand.....Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in* the world that *is to come; And hath put all things under his feet, and* hath given him *to be head over all things to the Church.* Upon these articles and conditions, Christ accepts the work; and resolves to take upon him the form of a servant, to be made under the authority of the Law, and to bear the curse of it, and the whole load of his Father's wrath due unto sin and sinners. *He shall bear their iniquities: Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death:* Isa. liii. 11, 12. And thus the Covenant of Redemption is, from all eternity, agreed and perfected between the Father and Jesus Christ.

3. *This undertaking and agreement of Christ in eternity was as valid and effectual for procuring all the good things of the Covenant of Grace, and the making of them over unto believers, as his actual performing of the terms afterwards in the fulness of time.*

Upon this lies the stress of our affirming the Covenant of Grace to be exhibited before Christ's coming into the world. For, had not Christ's undertaking been as effectual as his actual fulfilling, this Covenant of Grace could have been of no force, till his coming in the flesh, and his dying upon the cross. And therefore he was the mediator of the new covenant, to the Jewish believers, under the administration of the Law; to the patriarchs, before the promulgation of the Law; yea, to Adam himself, instantly upon his Fall: because the Covenant of Redemption, that he had entered into with his Father, gave him present right and title to enter upon his office, and to act as Mediator upon the account of his future sufferings. As a man, that purchaseth an inheritance, may presently enter upon the possession, though the day for the payment of the price be not yet come: so Christ, upon the contract and bargain

made with the Father, of purchasing the whole world to himself at the price of his death and blood, entered presently upon his purchase, though the day set for the payment of the price was some thousand years after. And thus Christ is called a *Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world:* Rev. xiii. 8; though some, indeed, would refer these words, *from the foundation of the world,* to the writing of the names, and not to the slaying of the Lamb; making the sense thus, Whose names were not written from the foundation of the world, in the book of life of the Lamb slain: and for this interpretation they allege, Rev. xvii. 8, yea, certainly, this slaying of the Lamb from the foundation of the world, may well be understood concerning the death of Christ, either typically represented in those sacrifices of lambs which Abel offered in the beginning of the world, or else decreed in God's purpose from all eternity, and thereupon valid to procure redemption for believers in all ages, even before his actual suffering of it.

These things I premise, that, in them, you might see upon what bottom stands the whole transaction between God and man, in entering into a Covenant of Grace. That man is at all restored, can be founded upon nothing but God's absolute purpose of having *mercy on whom he will have mercy.* That this restoring him to grace and favour, and consequently to eternal life, should be by a Covenant of Grace sealed and confirmed in the blood of Christ, is founded only on the eternal Covenant of Redemption made between the Father and the Son. The Covenant of Reconciliation is built upon the Covenant of Redemption; the covenant between God and Man, on the covenant between God and Christ.

(1) Here, possibly, some, instead of glorifying the infinite wisdom of God in thus laying the model and platform of our salvation, may be apt to cavil against the tediousness of the proceeding. "For, might not God, by one act of sovereign mercy, have pardoned our sins and remitted the punishment, though Christ had never died to satisfy justice? Might he not have accepted the sinner to favour and salvation, though Christ had never been sent to work out a perfect righteousness for him? What needed then this long and troublesome method, of designing him from eternity to be a Mediator, of appointing his own Son to so base a humiliation and so cursed a death; since all, that is now purchased for us at so mighty a rate, might have been conferred upon us by a free and absolute act of mercy?" Thus, possibly, the thoughts of men may work.

But to this I answer,

[1] It is saucy and unwarrantable presumption, for us to dis-

pute whether God could have saved us otherwise; since it is infinite love and mercy, that he will vouchsafe to save us any way. And, if so be it were not simply necessary that Christ should die to bring us to glory, this should the rather engage us to admire and adore the supererogation of the divine love: which designed him primarily a gift to men, as well as a sacrifice to God; and sent him into the world, not so much upon the necessity of satisfying justice, as of demonstrating infinite love and mercy: John iii. 16.

[2] Whether God might, according to his absolute pleasure, have saved us, without the satisfaction of Christ, is not necessary for us to know: since it is clearly revealed in Scripture, that this is the way, that God designed from all eternity; and, by which, in the fulness of time, he accomplished our salvation. Who can peremptorily determine, what God might or might not do, in this particular? Can we set limits to his power, or bound his prerogative? It should satisfy our enquiries, that this way of salvation is attainable; and that God is resolved to save us no other way than this. *There is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved:* Acts iv. 12.

[3] Yet, if any be farther inquisitive, only out of an awful reverence to search out the wonderful mystery of his redemption, I assert that it is most probable that God might, according to his absolute power and good pleasure have saved fallen mankind, though Christ had never been appointed to the work of redemption, nor any Covenant of Grace been made with us in him. Nor doth this position hold any correspondence with Socinianism; since we absolutely maintain, that it is God's revealed will and purpose to save none, but through the satisfaction of Christ.

(2) If it be said, that "No other way could be consistent with God's justice; and that therefore the Apostle tells us, Rom. iii. 26, that Christ was set forth as a propitiation to declare the righteousness of God, that he might be just, and the justifier of those that believe: and how could God be just, if he should pardon sin without a satisfaction; and by whom should this satisfaction be made, but by Christ the Mediator?"

To this I answer, that the Justice of God may be considered, In its Absolute Nature, as an infinite attribute and perfection of the divine essence. As to the External Expressions of it in punitive acts, taking vengeance on offenders.

If we take the justice of God in the Former respect, so it is essential to him, yea the same with him: and it is as blasphemous

a contradiction, to say that God can be, and yet not be just; as to say, that he may be, and yet not be holy, wise, almighty, &c.

But, if we take the justice of God for the Eternal Expressions of it in a vindicative way upon offenders, I can see no contradiction nor absurdity, in affirming that God might, if he had so pleased, have pardoned sinners without any satisfaction. If he punish without pardoning, he is just; and, if he should have pardoned without punishing, still he had been just. God created this world, to declare his power, wisdom, and goodness; yet still he had been essentially almighty, wise, and good, if he had never expressed these attributes in any effects of them. So God punisheth sin, to declare and glorify his justice; yet he would have been as essentially just, had he remitted it without exacting any punishment. And why should it be unjust with God, to acquit a guilty person without punishment; seeing it is not unjust with him, to assign an innocent person, his own Son, to bear the punishment of the guilty? Certainly, there was no more natural necessity, antecedent to the free determination of his own will, to punish another, that he might show mercy unto us; than there was, to show mercy to another, only with a design to punish us: and, therefore, there was no more need that God should punish Christ, that he might pardon us; than there was, that he should pardon Christ all the sins imputed to him, that he might justly punish us. For, if punitive justice be natural to God, so also is pardoning mercy. Yet I suppose none will deny, that God might, without wrong to his nature, have damned all men for sin, without affording pardon to any of them: and there can be no reason imagined, why it should be more natural to God to punish, than to pardon; unless we would make him, as the Marcionites and Manichees of old did, a *sævus et immitis Deus*. Sin doth, indeed, naturally and necessarily deserve punishment; but it doth not therefore follow, that God must, by the necessity of his nature, punish it: for then it would be as necessary for him to pardon, because the sinner deserves it not; because a sinner, deserving punishment, is as much the object of mercy, as of justice; both being equally essential attributes of the divine nature.

The truth is, that though all the divine perfections be natural and necessary to God, yet his will governs the external expressions of them: omnipotency, wisdom, justice, and mercy, are in God naturally, and not subject to the determination of his will: so that it is not from his will that he is almighty, nor all-wise, nor holy and righteous; but from his nature. But the outward expressions of these are arbitrary, and subject to his will: omnipotence is nat-

ural and essential unto God; yet it is his will that applies his power to such and such effects: so, likewise, though it be natural and necessary that God be just; yet the particular expression and manifestation of his justice, in a vindicative manner, is not necessary, but subject to the free determination of his will. As God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardens: so, he will have vengeance on whom he will have vengeance, and whom he will he might have pardoned, and that merely by the prerogative of his will.

(3) And if it be said, that "God, being a Holy God, must necessarily hate sin, and therefore punish it:"

I answer, that, though God's holiness doth necessarily infer his utmost hatred of sin, yet that hatred of sin doth not necessarily infer his punishing of sinners. For it must be acknowledged, that God may hate sin, *odio simplici, et non redundanti in personam:* i. e. "with a simple abhorrency and detestation of it, yet not with any ireful effects flowing from it upon the sinner." It is, indeed, absolutely necessary, that sinners should deserve punishment: this flows not from the will and constitution of God, but from the nature of the thing itself. But, that they be actually punished according to their deserts, depends wholly upon the determination of the divine will. That is the Third Position.

4. *Whether this way of salvation by Christ were simply and absolutely necessary, or no: yet, certain it is, that no other way could be so suited to the advancement of God's glory as this; and, therefore, it was most congruous, and morally necessary, that our salvation should be wrought out by his sufferings and satisfaction.* For,

(1) This is the most decent and becoming way, that God could take to reconcile sinners unto himself.

So the Apostle says expressly: Heb. ii. 10; *For it became him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through sufferings.* It would not become the Great Majesty of Heaven and Earth, whose sovereign authority was so heinously violated by such a vile and base creature as man is, to receive him into his love and favour without some repair made unto his honour. And, if there must intervene a satisfaction, there is none who could make it but only Jesus Christ.

(2) No other way could so jointly glorify both the mercy and the justice of God, as this of bringing men to salvation by Christ.

If God had absolutely remitted punishment, and accepted the sinner to life by his mere good pleasure, this indeed had been a glori

ous declaration of his mercy, but justice had lain obscured. If God had made a temporary punishment serve for an expiation of sin, here indeed both justice and mercy had been glorified; justice in punishing, mercy in relaxing the eternity of the punishment: but neither the one nor the other had been glorified to the utmost extent of them. But, in this redemption by Christ, justice hath its full glory; in that God takes vengeance on the sin to the very uttermost: and yet mercy is likewise glorified to the full; for the sinner is, without his own sufferings, pardoned, accepted, and saved. That none but Christ could do this is evident, because no mere creature could bear an infinite punishment so as to eluctate and finish it, and no finite punishment could satisfy an infinite justice: he must be a Man, that satisfies; else, satisfaction would not be made in the same nature that sinned: he must be God, likewise; else, human nature could not be supported from sinking under the infinite load of divine wrath: and, unless we would have either the Father or the Holy Ghost to become incarnate, this work of man's redemption must rest on Christ. And, indeed, who so fit to become a Mediator between God and man, as the middle Person in the Godhead? Thus then we see how expedient and fit it is, that our redemption should be accomplished by Christ Jesus: and, therefore, because the divine wisdom takes that way which is most expedient, it is, in a moral sense, necessary that it should be by him brought to pass; though, simply and absolutely, God might have laid another design for our salvation. *Potuit aliter fieri de potentia medici, sed non potuit commodius aut doctius præparari ut esset medicina ægroti.* August. Serm. iii. de Annunt. Dom.

And this, certainly, may commend the infinite love of God unto us; since he would not go the thriftiest way, in accomplishing our salvation. Although it were not simply necessary, yet, if it be more conducible to make the mercy of our redemption glorious, the Son of God must become the Son of Man, and the Son of Man *a Man of Sorrows.* He gives his natural Son, to gain adopted ones. He punisheth a righteous person, that he might pardon the guilty. God spares nothing, he saves nothing; that he might spare and save fallen man, in a way most adapted to glorify, both the severity of his justice, and the riches of his grace and mercy.

I shall not any longer detain you with preliminary truths. You see upon what the Covenant of Grace is grounded, viz., the Covenant of Redemption; and how far forth it was necessary, that Jesus Christ should be our Redeemer, and the Mediator of this Covenant of Reconciliation.

iii. TO COME NOW MORE IMMEDIATELY TO THE SUBJECT INTENDED, we must know, that the Covenant of Grace made by God with man, is twofold. There is the Absolute Covenant of Grace: and the Conditional.

Indeed, if we lay stress upon the words, as some do, there can be no such thing as an Absolute Covenant; because every covenant supposeth conditions and a mutual stipulation: but, yet, we may be well contented with the impropriety of the word so long as we use Scripture language.

1. Frequent mention is made of this *Absolute Covenant:* Jer. xxxii. 38—41. Ezek. xi. 17—20: but, most fully and clearly, Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. *This shall be the covenant, that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people:* which the Apostles quotes and transcribes. Heb. viii. 10.

It is not this Absolute Covenant, or Promise, call it which you will, that I intend to insist on; and, therefore, I shall only give you some brief remarks concerning it, and so proceed to treat of the Conditional Covenant.

(1) That this Absolute Covenant is made only to those, whom God foreknew according to his eternal purpose: but the Conditional Covenant is made with all the world.

God hath promised a new heart, only to some: but he promiseth life and salvation to all the world, if they convert and believe. And hence it follows, that the Absolute Covenant is fulfilled to all, with whom it is made: but the most part of mankind fall short of obtaining the benefits of the Conditional Covenant, because they wilfully fall short of performing the conditions.

(2) The Absolute Covenant of Grace is so called, because the mercies promised in it are not limited nor restricted to conditions.

For though, in the ordinary method of God's sanctifying grace, a sedulous and conscientious use of the means is necessary to our conversion, and the making of a new heart and spirit in us; yet these means are not conditions, because God hath not limited himself thereto. It is certain and infallible, that no man shall ever attain salvation without faith, repentance, and obedience: but no man can say it is impossible, that any should attain a new heart, faith, and conversion without preparations and previous dispositions.

(3) Faith is the very mercy itself promised in the Absolute Covenant: but it is only a condition for obtaining the mercy promised in the Conditional Covenant.

In this, God promiseth salvation to all men, if they will believe; in the other, he promiseth grace to his elect, to enable them to believe. All the benefits of the Conditional Covenant we receive by our faith; but our faith itself we receive by virtue of the Absolute Covenant: and therefore it follows, by necessary consequence that though no man can plead the promise of the Absolute Covenant for obtaining the gift of the first grace, yet likewise no man can receive comfort by the Conditional Covenant, till he be assured that the promise of the Absolute be performed to him.

(4) In brief, the Absolute Covenant promiseth the first grace of conversion to God: the Conditional promiseth life, if we be converted. The Conditional promiseth life, if we believe: the Absolute promiseth faith, whereby we may believe to the saving of our souls.

And therefore it is called an Absolute Covenant, because the first grace of conversion unto God cannot be given upon conditions. It is indeed commonly wrought in men by the right use of means; as hearing the word, meditation, prayer, &c., but these means are not conditions of grace, because we have found that, in some instances, God hath not limited himself to them. And, indeed, what is there, that can in reason be supposed as a condition of God's bestowing the first grace upon us? Either it must be some act of grace, or of mere nature: not of grace; for then the first grace would be already given: nor of nature; for then grace would be given according to works, which is the sum and upshot of Pelagianism. Whence it follows, that the Absolute Covenant, of giving grace and a new heart, is made only to those, who shall be saved; but the Conditional Covenant, of giving salvation upon faith and obedience, is made with all the world, and we may and ought to propound it to every creature, If thou wilt believe, thou shalt be saved.

2. It is not the Absolute, but the *Conditional Covenant* that the Apostle speaks of in the text.

For life and salvation are here promised upon the terms and conditions, of believing on Christ with the heart, and confessing him with the mouth; that is, of faith and obedience, as hath before been explained: and, therefore it is called the Conditional Covenant, because these conditions must be first fulfilled on our part, before any engagagement can lie upon God to give us the salvation promised. Here observe,

(1) That the Salvation, which the text mentions, when it saith "If thou believest in thy heart, and confessest with thy mouth, thou shalt be saved," comprehends in it all the benefits of the Covenant of Grace.

Not only Glorification, which it doth most signally denote; but also Pardon, Justification, Reconciliation, and Adoption: all which are called Salvation, because they all tend thereunto, and terminate in it.

(2) Though conditions are required on our part, yet the mercies of the covenant are promised to us out of mere free grace.

For, *therefore*, saith the Apostle, are Justification and Salvation *of faith, that* they *might be* of *grace:* Rom. iv. 16. For God's grace and free mercy, in enabling us to believe and obey, and thereupon saving us, is altogether as glorious, as if he should save us without requiring faith and obedience from us at all.

(3) Though faith and obedience are the conditions, which God requires for the obtaining of salvation, yet these conditions are themselves as much the free gift of God, as the salvation promised upon them.

By whom they are required, by the same God they are effectually wrought in the hearts of all those who shall be saved. And, therefore, as there is no Absolute Covenant, properly so called; so neither, in strictness of speech, is there any Conditional Covenant between God and man: because a condition, to which a promise is annexed, must, in propriety, be somewhat of our own, and within our own power; otherwise, the promise is but equivalent to an absolute denial. But, the conditions of the Covenant of Grace are not simply in our power to work them in ourselves; but to those, who shall be heirs of salvation, they are made possible by grace: to the rest they were once possible; which power they have lost, nor is God bound to repair it.

If it be said, "True: it is impossible for us to believe, unless God enable us; yet this doth not prove that it is not in our own power to believe: for without the assistance of God, and his influence, we cannot think, nor speak, nor move: *In him*, saith the Apostle, *we live, and move, and have our being:* yet who is so unreasonable as to say, that, because these are God's gifts, therefore we do not perform them by our own power? So, likewise, though faith be the gift of God, yet it may also be in the power of nature."

This is the refuge of some, to which they retire, when they are forced by Scripture evidence to acknowledge that faith is the gift of God: as if a common providential influence were alike sufficient to enable men to believe, and to perform any ordinary and natural action.

To this, therefore, I answer: That some actions depend only upon the concurrence of Common Providence; others, upon the influence

of Special Grace. And this I apprehend to be the true difference between these two: that the former are wrought in us by God, without the reluctance and opposition of our natural faculties; but the latter, against the bent and bias of our natures, which are now corrupted by the Fall. And, therefore, we may affirm, that the obedience, which Adam performed during his continuance in the state of innocence, was but a common work wrought in him by God's common influence; but our faith, and the same obedience in us, though it be far more imperfect, is from special grace: because, in him, it was wrought suitably to the tendency of his nature; but, in us, contrary to all its appetites and inclinations, which in this lapsed state of mankind are wholly evil and corrupt. And, thus much, the Apostle intimates unto us concerning faith: Eph. i. 18, 19, 20; *That ye* might *know....what is the exceeding greatness of his power* towards us *who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead:* therefore was the power, which God declared in raising Christ from the dead, an extraordinary and special power, because it was contrary to the course of nature, and far above the ability of any created agent to effect; and such, saith he, is the power that worketh faith in us. And so, again, Col. ii. 12; *Ye are risen with* Christ *through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead:* by the faith of the operation of God, we may rather understand the faith of God's operation, that is, which he worketh and implanteth in us, than our faith in God's operation of raising Christ from the dead: so that the scope of the place is plainly this: As Christ is raised, so are we raised with him by faith; which faith is wrought in us by the same almighty operation, that raised him from the grave, and therefore wrought in us by the supernatural efficacy of divine grace. Hence all those places, which mention faith to be the gift of God, must be understood not as of a gift of course, and of common influence; but of extraordinary power and special influence. So Phil. i. 29; *Unto you it is given....not only to believe....but also to suffer:* where, though it may seem that to suffer for the name of Christ denotes not any special work of God; yet, to suffer from a right principle and to a right end, to suffer with a calm submission and a conquering patience, is not less a gift and a special privilege bestowed upon us by the special and supernatural grace of God, than we assert faith itself to be. So, 2 Pet. i. 1. 3; *To them* who *have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God....According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.* I omit Eph. ii. 8. Yea are saved by *faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God;* because, though this place be

commonly produced to prove that faith is God's gift, yet I suppose that the word *gift* refers rather to salvation, than to faith: for so it must needs be, according to grammatical construction: Εξε σεσωσμενοι δια της πιςεως, και τουτο Θεε δωρον; else it would not be τουτο, but αυτη: so that the words do of necessity carry it, that this expression, *not of yourselves, it is the gift of God,* must be understood, that the salvation, which we obtain by faith, is not of ourselves, but God's free gift.

And thus you see that it is very well consistent, for faith and obedience to be conditions on our part, and gifts on God's.

iii. These things being premised, that which I shall now pursue is, to open to you, WHAT CONCURRENCE FAITH AND OBEDIENCE HAVE INTO OUR JUSTIFICATION AND SALVATION. Which certainly is as difficult a point to be explained, as it is necessary to be understood.

And, in order to this, I shall enquire into the nature of Justification itself: what it is, and signifies. Of justifying and saving Faith. Of that Obedience, which the Covenant of Grace requires from believers, as necessary to salvation. And, lay down some Positions, in answer to the Question.

And this I shall do with all the brevity and perspicuity, that the subject will permit.

1. *Justification,* therefore, in the most general and comprehensive notion of it, signifies the making of a man just and righteous.

(1) And this may be done Two ways.

[2] By making a real change in a man's Nature, through the infusion of the inherent qualities of holiness and righteousness.

[2] By making a relative change in his State, in respect of the sentence of the Law: that is, when the Law acquits and absolves a man from punishment, whether he hath committed the fact or not.

The former may be termed a Physical Justification; the latter, a Legal. The former Justification is opposed to unholiness; the latter, to condemnation: the one properly removes the filth; the other, the guilt of sin.

Now when we speak of the Justification of a sinner before God, it must still be understood of Justification in this latter sense, viz., as it signifies a judicial absolution of a sinner from guilt and punishment, according to a legal process, either at the bar of God or of conscience.

And herein lies the great error of the Papists in the doctrine of Justification, that they will not understand it as a law phrase, and a relative transaction in the discharge of a sinner; but still take it

for a real change of a man's nature, by implanting in him inherent principles of holiness. We grant, indeed, that, in order of nature, Sanctification is before Justification; for we are justified by faith, which faith is one great part of our Sanctification; but, in respect of time, Sanctification and Justification are together; for, in the very same instant that we believe, we are justified. Yet Justification is not the making of a man's person inherently just or holy: if it were, certainly the Wise Man would not have said, Prov. xvii. 15; *He, that justifieth the wicked, and he, that condemneth the just, even they both are* an *abomination to the Lord:* that man certainly would not be an abomination to the Lord, who should be serviceable to the implanting habitual holiness in another; since Daniel tells us, ch. xii. ver. 3; *They, that turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.* Many differences might be assigned between these two Justifications; but the chief are these: that man is the subject of the one, because holiness is wrought in him; but he is the subject of the other, for the judicial sentence of absolution is an act in God terminated upon the creature: the one, is by inherent grace; the other, by imputed righteousness: the one, is gradual; the other, complete at once: in brief, they differ as much as sanctifying our nature differs from acquitting and absolving our persons.

(2) This Justification doth always presuppose a righteousness in the person justified: for God doth not make a man inwardly righteous, because he justifies him; but therefore he justifies him, because he is righteous.

The righteousness therefore, that a man must have before he can be justified, is either,

[1] A Righteousness of Innocency, whereby he may plead the non-transgression of the Law, and that it was never violated by him. Or,

[2] A Righteousness of Satisfaction; whereby he may plead, that, though the command were transgressed, yet the penalty is borne and the Law answered.

These two respect the avoiding of the punishment threatened. Or,

[3] A Righteousness of Obedience, which he may plead for the obtaining of the good things promised; and this respects the reward propounded.

Now accordingly as any man can produce any of these righteousnesses, so shall he be justified. Innocency cannot be pleaded; for *all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God:* neither can we produce a personal Satisfaction, nor a personal Obedience wrought out by ourselves: and, therefore, our Justification is either utterly im-

possible for want of a righteousness, or else we must be justified by the righteousness of another imputed unto us.

(3) Christ, therefore, as our Surety, hath wrought out for us,

[1] A Righteousness of Satisfaction, which, in the eye and account of the Law, is equivalent to innocency. And, by this, we are freed from the penalty threatened against our disobedience.

[2] A Righteousness of Obedience, whereby we may lay claim to the reward of eternal life.

I am now the briefer in these things, because I have before opened them at large.

(4) We, therefore, having this twofold righteousness given to justify us, our Justification must accordingly consist of two parts: the Pardon and Remission of our Sins; our Acceptation unto Eternal life.

[1] Our Justification consists in the Pardon of Sin.

And this flows from the righteousness of Christ's satisfaction imputed to us. For guilt is nothing else but our obligation to punishment; and therefore pardon, being the removal of guilt, must needs remove our obligation to punishment. But no man can be justly obliged to that punishment, which he hath already satisfactorily undergone. And, therefore, Christ having satisfactorily undergone the whole punishment that was due to us, and God graciously accounting his satisfaction as ours, it follows, that we lie under no obligation to punishment; and are therefore, by the righteousness of Christ's satisfaction, pardoned and justified, ransomed and delivered from bearing the penalty of the Law. It is true, a pardon and full satisfaction are, in themselves, ασυζατα and inconsistent: if a man receive satisfaction for an injury done unto him, he cannot be said to pardon and remit it: how then can God be said to pardon sin, since his justice is fully satisfied by Christ? I answer: those very sins, which God doth pardon to the justified, he did not pardon to Christ, when they were made his by imputation: for his justice seized on him, and demanded and received the utmost farthing of all the debts he was surety for. And, therefore, pardon of sin is indeed inconsistent with personal satisfaction; but not with the satisfaction of another imputed to us: if God had satisfied his justice on us for our sins, then he could not have pardoned them: but to satisfy his justice on another for our sins, was at once to take punishment, and vouchsafe pardon; to punish our Surety, and to pardon us. That is, therefore, the first part of our Justification, viz., Pardon of Sin.

[2] In Justification, there is the imputation of the active righteousness and obedience of Christ, whereby we obtain a Right and Title and are accepted unto Eternal Life.

He hath fulfilled all righteousness for us, and we are *accepted in the Beloved.* The Law saith, *Do this, and live;* and God accounts Christ's doing it as ours. And, therefore, believers have as just a claim to life, as Adam could have had, had he never transgressed. I shall not again discuss, whether the right, which Justification gives us to eternal life, flow from Christ's righteousness of obedience or of satisfaction: to me, it seems to be from his obedience, and not so directly from his sufferings: for, though his sufferings be ours, yet the Law saith not Suffer this, and live, but *Do this, and live;* as I observed before.

And if it be objected, that, by a man's not being accounted a sinner, he must needs be accounted righteous; by his not being liable to damnation, he must needs have a right to salvation; and, therefore, that there is no more required unto Justification, than the imputation of Christ's satisfaction, which carries with it both pardon and acceptation to eternal life: To this I answer,

1st. That pardon of sins, through the satisfaction of Christ, doth give a man a negative righteousness: i. e. he is no longer accounted unrighteous, and therefore not liable to punishment: but this gives him no positive righteousness, which consists in a conformity to the precepts of the Law, by that active obedience, which should entitle him to the promised reward.

2dly. Though damnation and salvation be contrary states, so that he, who is not liable to the one, hath right to the other; yet they are not immediate contraries in their own nature, but only by divine appointment and institution. And, therefore, though a man should not be liable to damnation, yet his right to salvation doth not naturally result from this, but from God's appointment. It is true, if it be not night, it must be day: if the line be not crooked, it must be straight: because those are naturally opposite, and the one follows upon the denial of the other. But it is not true, that a man must either be liable to eternal death, or have a right to eternal life, because these states are not naturally and immediately opposite: for God, after he had pardoned a sinner, might justly annihilate him; or otherwise dispose of him, without bestowing upon him the eternal joys of heaven.

And, therefore, pardon of sin and acceptation unto eternal life, being two such distinct things, may well be allowed to proceed from distinct causes: the one, from the imputation of Christ's satisfaction; the other, from the imputation of his active obedience.

(5) So that you may take a brief description of Justification in these terms: It is a gracious act of God, whereby, through the

righteousness of Christ's satisfaction imputed, he freely remits to the believing sinner the guilt and punishment of his sins; and, through the righteousness of Christ's perfect obedience imputed, he accounts him righteous, and accepts him into love and favour, and unto eternal life. This is Justification: which is the very sum and pith of the whole Gospel, and the only end of the Covenant of Grace. For, wherefore was there such a covenant made with us through Christ, but, as St. Paul tells us, Acts xiii. 39, that, *by him, all that believe* might be *justified from all things, from which* they *could not be justified by the Law of Moses?*

Possibly some things may occur, in the opening of this point, hard and rugged: and, though this doctrine be in itself sweet and refreshing, and like rivulets of water to the dry and parched earth; yet this water must be smitten out of a rock. Rivers, generally, the deeper they are, the more smoothly do they flow: but these waters of the sanctuary are of a quite different nature, and the deeper they are, usually the more rough and the more troubled. But beware you do not think every thing unnecessary, that is not plain and obvious. It is the fault of many Christians, and a fault that deserves reproof, to pass slightly over the great mysteries of religion, under a vilifying conceit which they have of them as unprofitable and unpracticable notions. They do not find, when they sit under such discourses as these, that their affections are so moved, their hearts so warmed, their love so inflamed, their desires made so spiritually vehement, their whole souls so wrought upon and melted, as when threatenings are thundered, duties pressed, promises applied, and the more affecting part of religion dispensed; and so they go away, reckoning they have but lost their time, and the opportunity of an ordinance. For my part, it should be my importunate prayer, that all Christians were so taught of God and built up in the truths of the Gospel, that there might need no more instruction, but only admonition, exhortation, reproof, comfort, and the more practical part of the ministerial work: but, when we see so many old babes, so many monstrous and misshapen Christians, whose heads are the lowest and most inferior part about them, still we find abundant cause and need to inculcate truths, as well as to raise desires; that so, their zeal and affections may be built upon, and regulated according to, knowledge. Certainly, the more you know of God and Christ, and the way of your salvation through an imputed righteousness, the more will you admire, adore, and advance divine love and wisdom, and the more humble and abase yourselves. And, though some of these things be difficult, yet it is

very unworthy of a Christian not to take some pains to understand what God, if I may be allowed so to speak, took so much pains to contrive.

2. Having thus showed you what Justification is, the next thing propounded was to open *the Nature of Justifying and Saving Faith*, which is the great condition of the Covenant of Grace.

And, indeed, of all Gospel Truths, it is most necessary to have a clear and distinct knowledge of this: for it is in vain to press men to this duty of believing, as that whereon the whole weight of their salvation depends, if yet they know not what this Grace of Faith is, nor what it is to believe. There is no one duty, that the Gospel doth more frequently command or ministers inculcate, or hath so great a stress laid upon it: and, yet, because men know not what it is, and how they must act it, this ignorance either discourageth them into an utter neglect, or else misleads them to exert other acts for saving faith, and to build their hopes of heaven and eternal happiness upon a wrong foundation.

And, truly, it is a point of some difficulty, precisely to state wherein lies the formal nature of this grace. For,

(1) Many formerly, and those of the highest remark and eminency, have placed true faith in no lower a degree than Assurance; or the secure persuasion of the pardon of their sins, the acceptation of their persons, and their future salvation.

But this, as it is very sad and uncomfortable for thousands of doubting and deserted souls, concluding all those to fall short of grace, who fall short of certainty; so hath it given the Papists too great advantage to insult over the doctrine of our first reformers as containing most absurd contradictions. Nor, indeed, can their argument be possibly avoided or answered: for, if Pardon and Justification be obtained only by faith, and this faith be only an assurance or persuasion that I am pardoned and justified, then it will necessarily follow, that I must believe I am pardoned and justified, that I may be pardoned and justified: that is, I must believe I am pardoned and justified, before I either am or can be; which is to believe a lie. This will necessarily follow upon limiting faith to assurance. Faith therefore is not assurance: but this doth sometimes crown and reward a strong, vigorous, and heroic faith; the Spirit of God breaking in upon the soul with an evidencing light, and scattering all that darkness and those fears and doubts which before beclouded it.

(2) Some again place faith only in an act of Affiance or Incumbence upon the Mercies of God and the Merits of Jesus Christ, reposing all our hope for heaven and happiness in them alone.

This indeed must be allowed to be one act of a true and saving faith, but cannot be the entire and adequate notion of it.

(3) Others make faith to consist in an undoubting Assent to the Truths and Promises of the Gospel. An assent, not only forced and compelled by the mere evidence and light of the truths therein delivered: for so, the devils believe and tremble; and, from their natural sagacity and woeful experience, know the great truths of the Gospel to be unquestionably so, as they are there revealed. But an assent, wrought in the soul from the reverend and due regard of God's authority and veracity; yielding firm belief to all that the Scripture propoundeth, because of the testimony of that God, who can neither deceive, nor be deceived: such an assent to truth, as prevails upon the conscience, and influenceth the conversation: a belief, that is not overborne by corrupt and vile affections, but conforms the life and practice, and makes them suitable, to the rules of God's Word.

This many, and that with a great deal of reason, make to be the proper notion of a True and Saving Faith. And the Scripture doth so far affirm that such an assent as this is true faith, that, in very many places, it seems to require no more than barely to believe those truths concerning God and Christ, which are revealed in it: as, *that Jesus is the Son of God;* that he came into the world to save sinners: 1 John iv. 15; and chap. v. 5; and that God raised him from the dead. Yet these places must not be so understood, as if nothing more were required to constitute a true believer, besides a mere assent to these things; but that this assent is then true faith, when it overcomes the will, seasons the affections, and regulates our lives and actions. He hath true and saving faith, who believes that Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the true Messiah, is come into the world, and submits his conscience and his conversation to the consequences of such a belief; that is to say, to love and obey him as the Son of God and the Saviour of the World. Now the very reason, why the Scripture doth express faith by an assent unto certain propositions, is, not that such a dogmatical faith as rests only in notion and speculation will suffice to bring any to heaven and happiness, but because the Holy Ghost aimed chiefly at that, which was least known and most gainsayed by the Jews and the unbelieving world: for it was not at all unknown or contradicted by them, that, if Jesus Christ were the Son of God all adoration and obedience ought to be paid unto him; but they denied that Jesus was this Son of God and the Saviour of the World. Therefore the Scripture requires an assent unto these propositions:

that *Jesus is the Christ:* that *he died for our sins and rose again from the dead:* and calls this true and saving faith, because, wheresoever this assent hath its due and proper effect to engage us to the performance of all those duties which naturally depend upon it and flow from it, there this faith is undoubtedly justifying and saving.

(4) Some make faith to consist in the hearty and sincere Acceptance of Christ Jesus, in his Person and Offices; as he is represented and tenders himself unto us, in his Gospel.

These Offices of Christ are three.

[1] He is our Prophet, to instruct us in the will of God, and to declare unto us the way of salvation.

[2] He is our Priest, to expiate our sins and reconcile us unto God by the sacrifice of himself, and to present our duties and services to God by his prevailing and eternal intercession.

[3] He is our King, to rule and govern us, by the laws of his Word, and by the conduct of his Holy Spirit.

And whosoever he be, that doth cordially and entirely receive Christ in all these offices and submit his soul to the authority of them, he is the person, whose faith will justify him; for he believes to the saving of his soul.

Now between this description of faith and the former, there is no such difference, but that they may very amicably conspire and be joined in one. For he, that gives a firm Assent to all the Truths of the Gospel, doth thereby own his subjection to the prophetical office of Christ, as the great teacher and doctor of his Church. And if this assent influence both his affections and his conversation, it will make him likewise submit to the priestly office of Christ, in relying only upon his merits for the pardon of his sins and eternal salvation; and also to his kingly office, in submitting to his sceptre and conforming his heart and life according to his holy laws.

Yet, to proceed a little more exactly in this matter, let us observe, that when we speak of a true, saving, and justifying faith, it is not any one single act, either of knowledge or will; but a complicated grace, made up of many particular acts, and is nothing else but the motion of the whole soul towards God and Christ. For we are not now speaking of faith, philosophically taken; for that is no other than a bare act of the understanding, assenting to the truth of a testimony: but we speak of faith in a theological and moral sense; and so, though it bear the name but of one grace, yet it consists of many acts of the soul. It supposes knowledge: it connotes assent: it excites love, and engages to obedience: yet still, that, which gives it the formal denomination of Faith, is Assent to

the Truth. As for Assurance, I look upon that, not as a distinct part of faith, but a high and exalted degree and measure of it: not vouchsafed to all, scarse to any at all times; but only to some few, through the special witness of the Holy Spirit with their spirits.

So that, if we would at once see in brief what a True and Saving Faith is, we may take the sum of it in this description. It is when a sinner, being, on the one hand, thoroughly convinced of his sins, of the wrath of God due to him for them, of his utter inability either to escape or bear this wrath; and, on the other hand, being likewise convinced of the sufficiency, willingness, and designation of Christ to satisfy justice, and to reconcile and save sinners; doth hereupon yield a firm assent unto these truths revealed in the Scripture, and also accepts and receives Jesus Christ in all his offices: as his Prophet, resolving to attend unto his teaching; as his Lord and King, resolving to obey his commands; and as his Priest, resolving to rely upon his sacrifice alone; and doth accordingly submit to him, and confide in him sincerely and perseveringly. This is that faith, which doth justify; and will certainly save all those, in whom it is wrought.

3. The next thing propounded, was to open *the Nature of that Obedience, which the Covenant of Grace requires as necessary to Salvation.*

This I shall do very briefly. And, therefore, I take it for granted, that obedience is required under the Covenant of Grace as strictly as ever it was under the Covenant of Works; and required, not only to show our gratitude and thankfulness, but necessarily and indispensibly in order to the obtaining of heaven and eternal life.

If I should quote to you all the Scriptures, which are plain proofs for this, I should repeat a great part of the Bible. The Moral Law requires perfect obedience from us, and condemns every failure as sinful: and this Moral Law is still in force even to believers themselves; commanding and requiring from them the highest degree of obedience, as absolutely and authoritatively as if they were to be saved by a Covenant of Works: for faith makes not void the preceptive part of the Law. But the Covenant of Grace insists not so much on the measure and degree of our obedience, as on the quality and nature of every degree, that it be sincere and upright.

Yet, certainly, that is not sincere obedience, which doth willingly and allowedly fall short of the highest degree of perfection. For this sincerity consists in an universal hatred of all sin, without sparing or indulging ourselves in any; and in an universal regard of every command of God's Law, not dispensing with nor exempt-

ing ourselves from the most difficult, severe, and opposite duty to flesh and blood, that is therein enjoined us.

He, whose conscience can thus testify to him, that, though he doth too often transgress and offend, yet he ever hates what he sometimes doth; that he abhors every false way; that he opposes and resists, and is rather through the subtlety of Satan and the deceitfulness of sin surprised unawares, than voluntarily and premeditately contrives and determines to sin; and, though he doth fall infinitely short of the exact strictness and holiness of the Law, yet that he hath a cordial respect to all God's commandments, and doth both desire and endeavour to conform his life and conversation to that most perfect rule; that man may certainly know, that, let his obedience be more or less perfect, according to the greater or less measures of sanctifying grace received from God, yet it is such as the Covenant of Grace requires, and God will accept unto his salvation. But, let no one take this for an encouragement of sloth and negligence in God's service: for let not that man think that his obedience is sincere, who doth not, with unwearied pains and industry, strive to his very utmost to please and serve God in all things. But, for those, whose consciences bear them witness that they do so, let them know, for their comfort, that, though they fall far short of what they should and would be, yet the sincerity of their obedience is accounted and accepted with God for perfection.

When God first established the Moral Law, which was when he first wrote it upon the heart of Adam, he made it a covenant, that whosoever should answer the perfection of that law should obtain life: but, by the Fall we having lost the power of obedience, the grace of the Gospel promiseth acceptance to our imperfect obedience, if performed sincerely. The Law requires, as necessary to our conformity to God's purity and holiness, that our duties be perfect: the corruption of our nature makes them imperfect and defective, both from their rule and pattern. The Covenant of Grace requires, as necessary to salvation, that that obedience, which ought to be perfect according to the rule, but is imperfect by reason of our corruption, should be sincere and upright: and this, God will accept and crown with eternal life and glory.

And thus I have opened to you, as briefly and clearly as I could, both what Justification, Faith, and Evangelical Obedience are.

4. There remaineth but one thing more, which when I have finished, I shall close up this subject of the Doctrine of the Covenants: and that is, *to show what influence Faith and Obedience have into our Justification and Salvation.* And here,

(1) I shall lay down these following Positions.

[1] That faith doth not justify us, as it is in itself a Work or Act exerted by us.

It is true, the Apostle tells us, Rom. iv. 22, that Abraham's faith *was imputed to him for righteousness:* but this cannot be understood literally and properly, as if the very act of believing were his righteousness; for then it would contradict many other places of Scripture, asserting that Christ Jesus is our righteousness. It must therefore be taken tropically, as relating to Christ: that is, faith is our righteousness no otherwise, than as it makes over the righteousness of Christ unto us; and not as it is in itself a work or grace. For, did it justify us as a work, then the Apostle, Rom. iv. 5, had very incongruously opposed him that *worketh,* to him that *believeth: To him that worketh not, but believeth.....his faith is counted for righteousness:* for were faith our righteousness as a work, then he, that believeth, would be he, that worketh; and his work would be accounted to him for righteousness. Neither, indeed, is it any whit less absurd, to think that our faith, which is an imperfect grace, can yet be a perfect and complete righteousness: for faith itself hath its manifold failings, and is, as one saith well, like the hand which Moses stretched out in working of miracles; for, as that hand was smitten with leprosy, to show that it was no efficacy in the hand itself that wrought those wonders, so even the faith that justifies hath a leprosy, an uncleanness cleaving to it, to show that it justifies not by its own virtue, not as it is a work and act of ours, for so itself needeth justification.

[2] Neither doth faith justify, as it is the Fulfilling of the Condition of the Covenant of Grace: *He, that believeth shall be saved.*

For, as I have observed before, faith is not properly and immediately the condition of this covenant, but remotely and secondarily. For we must resolve this covenant thus: He that can produce a perfect righteousness, shall be saved; but he, that believes, shall have the perfect righteousness of Christ made his: so, from the first to the last, *He, that believeth shall be saved.* Where it is to be noted, that faith is not made the immediate condition of salvation; but only it is the immediate condition of obtaining an interest in a perfect righteousness, by which we are justified and saved.

[3] Faith justifying neither as a work nor as a condition, and therefore not as being itself our righteousness, it remains, that it must needs justify as it gives us a Right and Title to the Righteousness of another, even of Jesus Christ.

So that we are not so properly justified by faith, as by the righte

ousness, which faith apprehends and applies: for, the righteousness of Christ being made ours, God is engaged in justice to justify us, because then we are righteous persons. This virtue, that faith hath to justify, is not its own; neither proceeds from itself, but from the object, which it apprehends and makes ours, viz., the Righteousness of Christ, by which we are justified, directly and immediately; but by faith, only correlatively and metonymically, as it relates unto the righteousness of Christ. When the woman was healed only by touching of Christ's garments, the virtue that healed her proceeded not from her touch, but from him whom she touched: yet our Saviour tells her, that her faith had made her whole: Matt. ix. 22. which can no more be properly understood of her faith, than of her touch; for still the healing virtue was from Christ, conveyed to her by her faith, and that faith testified by her touch: so, when we say that we are justified by faith, we must understand that faith doth it not through its own virtue, but by virtue of Christ's righteousness, which is conveyed to us by our faith. This Righteousness of Christ, as I have observed before, is both a Righteousness of Satisfaction and of Obedience; for we need both unto our Justification: and these must be made ours, or else we can never be justified by them: ours, they cannot be naturally, as wrought out by ourselves; consequently, they must be ours legally, and by imputation; the Law looking upon what our Surety hath done, as though we had done it, and accordingly dealing with us.

Now if we can but apprehend how faith makes the righteousness of Christ to be ours, it will be very easy and obvious to apprehend the way and manner how we are justified.

To clear up this, therefore,

[4] Faith makes the righteousness of Christ's satisfaction and obedience to be ours, as it is the Bond of that Mystical Union, that there is between Christ and the believing soul.

If Christ and the believer be one, the righteousness of Christ may well be reckoned as the righteousness of the believer. Nay, mutual imputation flows from mystical union: the sins of believers are imputed to Christ, and the righteousness of Christ to them; and both justly, because being united each to other by mutual consent (which consent on our part is faith) God considers them but as one person. As it is in marriage, the husband stands liable to the wife's debts, and the wife stands interested in the husband's possessions; so it is here: faith is the marriage-band and tie between Christ and a believer: and, therefore, all the debts of a believer are chargeable upon Christ, and the righteousness of Christ is instated

upon the believer: so that, upon the account of this marriage-union, he hath a legal right and title to the purchase made by it. Indeed this union is a high and inscrutable mystery; yet plain it is, that there is such close, spiritual, and real union between Christ and a believer: the Scripture often both expressly affirms it, 1 Cor. vi. 17; *He, that is joined unto the Lord, is one spirit*; and also lively illustrates it by several resemblances. It is likewise plain, that the band of this union, on the believer's part, is faith: consult Rom. chap. xi. ver. 17, compared with the 20th verse. And, therefore, from the nearness of this union, there follows a communication of interests and concerns: insomuch, that the Church is called Christ, 1 Cor. xii. 12; *So also is Christ;* and their sufferings called the sufferings of Christ, Col. i. 24. Acts ix. 4. So, likewise, from this mystical union, the sins of believers are laid upon Christ, and his righteousness imputed unto them: see this as to both parts, 2 Cor. v. 21; *He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him:* and, Gal. iii. 13, 14. He *hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us....That the blessing of Abraham might come on us.* It is still upon the account of this union, that Christ was reckoned a sinner, and we are reckoned as righteous. And, therefore, as Faith is the bond and tie of this union, so it is, without more difficulty, the way and means of our Justification: by faith, we are united unto Christ; by that union, we have truly a righteousness; and, upon that righteousness, the justice of God, as well as his mercy, is engaged to justify and acquit us.

And thus you see this great truth explained, of Justification by Faith; which hath, indeed, been as great a torment and vexation to men's understandings to conceive how it should be, as it hath been peace and quiet to their consciences in the certainty it was so. And, if these things were duly pondered, they might perhaps put a speedy issue to many laborious and testy disputes; especially concerning faith's instrumentality and causality in our Justification.

(2) Concerning Obedience, or Good Works, two things remain to be inquired into. Their Necessity and Influence into Salvation, or our obtaining the state of eternal glory. Their Necessity and Influence into Justification, which gives us a right and title to that eternal glory.

[1] The Covenant of Grace requires Good Works of Believers, as Necessary to Salvation.

There is a lazy and lethargic error, that hath seized on many, who make Christ not only their Surety to work out a righteous-

ness, but also their Servant to work out an obedience and holiness for them. What need they pray, or hear, or perform any other duty of religion or obedience; for Christ hath done all for them, and if they believe they are sure of being accepted and saved? and, therefore, they count it the sign of a legal spirit, to do any more than idly sit down, and believe; expecting to be carried to heaven in such a vain dream and contemplation. Here,

1st. It is true, that obedience is not necessary as the Procuring or Meritorious Cause of salvation.

In respect of merit, we are to sit down and believe; and those good works are saucy and sacrilegious, that aim at heaven upon the account of desert: Eph. ii. 8, 9; *By grace are ye saved....not of works.* Indeed the Scripture doth frequently call salvation by the name of a reward: Col. iii. 24; *Of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance.* Heb. xi. 26; *He had respect unto the recompense of the reward.* And it doth as frequently call the obedient worthy of this reward: Luke xx. 35; *They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain* the *world* to come, *and the resurrection from the dead.* 2 Thess i. 5; *That ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God.* Yet neither of these expressions doth amount to a proper merit; such as commutative justice may require, where the price must fully answer the value of the thing purchased: but only such a merit and worthiness, as ariseth from the free promise of God. God hath promised salvation to those, who obey him; and, therefore, because of this promise, it is bestowed upon them as a reward of their obedience: and they are said to be worthy of such a reward, not because their obedience is in itself worthy of it; but, rather, because it is worthy of God to stand to his word, and to fulfil the promise he hath made.

2dly. Good works are necessary to eternal salvation, though not as the meritorious cause of the reward, yet as the Disposing Cause of the Subject; for these are they, which do dispose and prepare us for salvation.

And therefore the Apostle, Col. i. 12, speaks of being made *meet to be partakers of the inheritance* with *the saints in light.* If a wicked person should be made partaker of this inheritance, how strange, how vexatious a thing would it be to him, to spend an eternity there in holiness, who had here spent all his time in sin and wickedness! And, therefore, God accustoms them, whom he saves by ordinary means, unto the work of heaven while they are here on earth. Let those consider this, to whom holiness is so irksome and unsuitable now: it is utterly impossible, that such men can be made happy and blessed; for, if God should take them up to heaven with

their natures unchanged, unrenewed, he would only free them from a painful hell, to sentence them to a troublesome one. How shall they sing the Song of the Lamb, who never had their hearts and voices tuned unto it? Or how shall they endure to behold the glorious majesty of God face to face, who never before saw him so much as darkly through a glass by the eye of faith? It is a perfect torture, for eyes, locked up in a long and dismal darkness, to be suddenly stretched open against the bright beams of the sun; and so would it be, if men, who have long lived in a blind and wicked state, should suddenly be stricken with the dazzling glory of heaven flashing in their faces. And therefore God usually prepares them, both to do the work and to bear the reward of heaven, before he brings them thither. It is said of the godly, Rev. xiv. 13, that they *rest from their labours, and their works do follow them:* this is especially meant, I doubt not, of the reward of their works; but yet it holds true also of the works themselves: though, in heaven, they rest from their labour in working; in working against temptations, against corruptions, and under afflictions; yet they rest not from their working, for those very works, in which they employed themselves on earth, they also perform in heaven, so far forth as they have there an object for them. Were it, therefore, only to dispose and qualify the soul for the everlasting work of heaven, this were reason and ground enough, to require obedience and good works as necessary to salvation.

3dly. I need not tell you, that good works are necessary, upon the absolute and sovereign Command of God.

If God should command good works for no other end, but to show the authority which he hath over us, and for us to show our obedience again unto him; yet that cannot be any longer an unnecessary thing, which the Great God of Heaven and Earth enjoins. 1 Thess. iv. 3; *This is the will of God:* i. e. this is the great command of his revealed will, *even your sanctification.* And we are said to be the *workmanship* of God, *created.....unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them:* Eph. ii. 10.

4thly. They are necessary, as a Debt of Gratitude.

If we had no other law, yet Christian Ingenuity would oblige us to obey that God, who hath already done so much for us, and from whom we expect such great things for the future. Hath God given us a spiritual life in present possession, and an eternal life in reversion; and is it possible we should be careless of his honour and service? Certainly, the love of Christ must constrain us to live no longer to ourselves; but to him, who died for us: as the Apostle urgeth it, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. It is such a powerful and persuasive

motive, that we cannot resist it, without the blackest brand of disingenuity and ingratitude. Thus, again, the Apostle urgeth, 1 Cor. vi. 20; *Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.* So that, upon the account of our redemption, we are obliged, by the strictest and most sacred bonds of gratitude, to serve and glorify our Redeemer. Yet, though this be the sweetest, it is not the only tie to duty. It will indeed be so, when we come to heaven: but, whilst we have the mixture of a base and sordid spirit, God hath not left his service to stand at the courtesy of our ingenuity; but hath laid as absolute and peremptory commands upon us, as though he dealt only with slaves and vassals; and yet urgeth it as much upon our gratitude and ingenuity, as if the only prerogative he hath over us, were but love and friendship.

5thly. Obedience and good works are necessary, as the Way and Means whereby we must obtain salvation.

And so, though they have no necessity of causality in procuring it by their own merit, yet they have a necessity of order or method, according to which God will bestow it, and not otherwise. And therefore the Apostle tells us, that God hath *fore-ordained* good works, *that we should walk in them.* They are the pathway, that he hath chalked out for us to heaven; and, therefore, as ever we will arrive thither, it is necessary that we walk in this way. Yea, should it be supposed that an elect or a regenerate person should forsake this way of obedience, and betake himself unto the broad way wherein the most walk, we affirm that he is going the direct and ready road to hell; and hell he cannot escape, unless he stop and return. Let their mouths, therefore, be for ever silenced, who exclaim against the doctrine of Justification and Salvation by Faith, as that, which destroys the necessity of Good Works. We are far from that libertinism, to conclude, that, because Christ hath obeyed the whole Law for us, therefore we are exempted from obedience. He hath done for us whatsoever was required, in order to merit and satisfaction; yet he hath not done for us whatever was required, in order to obedience and a holy conversation; that is, Christ hath done his own work for us; but he hath not done our work for us: he hath done the work of a Mediator and Redeemer; but he never did the work of a sinner, that stood in need of a Redeemer, so as to excuse him from it. And, therefore, though men may be justified by a surety, yet they cannot be sanctified by a surety, but, still, holiness, obedience, and good works must be personal, and not imputative.

Thus then you see the absolute necessity of good works, in those who are capable of performing them, in order unto eternal salvation. They are necessary, not indeed as the meretorious cause of it, but as a preparing and disposing cause; necessary, by God's absolute and indispensable command; as a debt of gratitude; and, lastly, as the way and means, by which alone it can be obtained. Thus the Apostle, Heb. v. 9; Christ is become *the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.*

[2] The next thing to be inquired into, is, the Necessity and Influence of Obedience and Good Works, into our Justification.

And, in order to this, I shall lay down these following particulars.

1st. Good works, or obedience, doth not justify us in the sight of God, as it is itself our righteousness.

This is the main scope and drift of the whole Epistle to the Romans, and of a great part of the Epistle to the Galatians. It were endless to cite all the texts: see only Rom. iii. 20; *By the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight:* and v. 28, the Apostle lays down this great conclusion as the upshot of his dispute, *Therefore we conclude,* saith he, *that a man is justified.....without the deeds of the Law*: and, Gal. ii. 16; *Knowing that a man is not justified by the deeds of the Law.* It is needless to add more.

And, therefore, I shall only answer an objection or two, drawn from Scripture, against this doctrine. For,

(1st) Some may say that the Scripture seems to attribute Justification unto Works, as well as unto Faith: for it is said of Phineas, Psal. cvi. 30, 31, that he *executed judgment* (viz., in killing Zimri and Cosbi) *and that was* imputed *unto him for righteousness.*

But, to this, the answer is easy: That the Psalmist speaks only of the righteousness of that particular act of Phineas, that it was imputed to him for righteousness: *i. e.* it was accounted by God as a righteous deed; though, perhaps, others might censure it, as proceeding from rash and unwarrantable zeal, acting without a commission. But,

(2dly) The great place, most urged and insisted on, for Justifition by Works, is James, chap. ii., from the 14th verse to the end; especially verse 24; *Ye see, then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.*

Here the grand difficulty is, how we shall reconcile St. Paul, asserting that we are justified by faith only without works, with St. James, affirming we are justified by works, and not by faith only.

To this I answer: That there is no opposition at all between the two Apostles. For St. Paul only excludes works, from being the

way and means of our Justification; and St. James only excludes that faith, which is without works. St. Paul disputes against Legalists and Self-justiciaries, who trusted to their own works to justify them; and, against them, he lays down this conclusion, That it is faith, and not works, that doth justify: but St. James disputes against the Gnostics and Libertines, who trusted to an outward and fruitless profession of faith, or rather indeed to a vain fancy instead of faith; and, against them, he lays down this conclusion, That not by faith only, but by works, a man is justified. St. Paul's scope is, to show by what we are justified; and that, he tells us, is by faith: St. James's scope is to show what kind of faith that is, which must justify us; not an empty, vain, fantastical faith, but such as is operative and productive of good works: his intent is not, to exclude faith from our justification, no nor so much as to join works with it in partnership and commission; for, verse 23, he tells us, *the Scripture was fulfilled, which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness:* the very place, which St. Paul, Rom. iv. 3, Gal. iii. 6, makes use of to prove Justification by Faith: and, therefore, when he saith a man is justified by works, he contends for nothing else but a Working Faith: Abraham, saith he, was *justified by works*, ver. 21: if you ask how that doth appear, he tells you it was because his faith *was imputed unto him for righteousness:* now let any man declare, that can, what sense there can be in this proof, if, by being justified by faith, he should mean any thing else besides a working faith. So that the upshot of all that St. James here intends, is, to show us, that the faith, which justifies us, must be a faith bringing forth good works; and that, we grant and contend for: and, likewise, to exclude a barren speculative faith, which is not accompanied with good works; to exclude it, I say, from having any influence into our Justification. So, in the 14th verse, *What doth it profit.....though a man say he hath faith, and have* no *works? Can faith save him? i. e.* Can such a faith as hath no works save him? This faith he calls a *dead* faith: v. 17; the faith of *devils:* v. 19; and the faith of a *vain man:* v. 20: now a dead faith, a faith that may be in devils and vain men, is no true faith, nor can any affirm that it will justify. Thus you see St. Paul and St. James fully accorded, about this doctrine of Justification by Faith. St. Paul affirms, that it is faith alone that justifies: St. James denies, that a lonely faith can justify: and we assent to both as true; for the faith, which alone justifies us, is not a lonely or solitary faith, but accompanied and attended by good works.

That is the first particular. Good works are not the righteousness by which we are justified.

2dly. Though we are not justified by works, yet good works are necessary to our Justification, so that we cannot possibly be justified without them.

There must, at least, be those inward good works of sorrow for sin, hatred of it, true repentance and humiliation, hope in the pardoning mercy of God though Jesus Christ. Yea, faith itself must be in the soul as it is a good work, before it can justify: this is evident; for if faith justify, and a justifying faith be a good work (though it doth not justify as it is so) then some good work is absolutely necessary to Justification. Yea,

3dly. Good works are absolutely necessary, to perserve the state of Justification when once obtained.

It is impossible that we should maintain our Justification, without believing, repenting, mortifying the deeds of the body, and performing the duties of new obedience; all which are good works; and the reason is, because, as soon as these cease, their contraries, which are utterly inconsistent with a justified estate, succeed in the room of them. If faith, repentance, and mortification cease, it is impossible that Justification can be preserved; otherwise, a man might be a justified unbeliever, a justified impenitent, a justified slave to his lusts; which is a contradiction. You see then that good works are necessary, both for the first obtaining of Justification, and for the preservation of it when obtained. Hence, then,

4thly. We may easily determine that much debated question, Whether good works be required in the Covenant of Grace as a condition of Justification.

For if, by a Condition of Justification we negatively understand that, without which we cannot be justified, then certain it is, that, in this sense, good works are a condition of it. But, if we take condition positively, for that, whereby we are justified, so not works, but a working faith, is the condition. We are not justified by works, neither can we be justified without them. And, therefore, when the Apostle tells us, Rom. iii. 28, that we are *justified by faith without the deeds of the Law*, this must not be understood without the presence of works, for that I have shown you is necessarily required, but without their causality and influence into our Justification. Conditions we may call them, in a large sense, because they are indispensable required in the person justified; but they are, in no wise, causes or means of our Justification.

So that, you see the doctrine of Justification by Faith is no patronage for looseness and libertinism. Good works are now as necessary under the Covenant of Grace, as ever they were under the

Covenant of Works; but only to other ends and purposes. The Covenant of Works required them, that we might be justified by them; but the Covenant of Grace requires them, that we might be justified by faith. Let none think, that the Covenant of Grace gives any dispensation from working; or that an airy and speculative faith, and a barren and empty profession, are enough to answer the terms of this covenant: *Can faith save him?* and yet what other is the faith of many professors? Should I bid them show me their faith by their works, I much doubt, that, besides phrases and canting, we should have but very slender evidences of their Christianity; and yet these men are very apt to condemn others for carnal legalists, and low attainers. But let such notionists flatter themselves as they please; yet, certainly, they will find such low attainers, who work out their salvation with fear and trembling, more exalted saints in glory, than those, who think both working, fear, and trembling too slavish and servile, and below the free spirit of the gospel.

*Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect.....to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ: to whom be glory for ever and ever.* Amen.

# THE NATURE AND NECESSITY OF REGENERATION; OR, THE NEW-BIRTH.

*Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* JOHN iii. 5.

THE former part of this chapter, in which division these words fall, reports the conference that passed betwixt Christ and Nicodemus. Their discourse is concerning the great mystery of the New-Birth; of which this night-disciple had but a dark and midnight conception. In the third verse, our Saviour startles him; and asserts, as he doth again in the text, the absolute necessity of this great change: *Except a man be born again, he cannot* enter into *the kingdom of God.* In the verse following, Nicodemus objects against it; and thinks to refute the Second Birth, by such pitiful doting arguments, as might alone prove him twice a child: *Can a man,* says he, *be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?* No doubt but this learned Rabbi thought he had brought a gravelling instance against this new doctrine of the New-Birth. Such ignorant pieces are the most wise and learned, when they attempt by reason to search out those mysterious effects of God's Spirit, which cannot be known otherwise than by illumination and experience. Our Saviour, therefore, in the words of the text, takes off this gross and ill-conceited objection: and tells him, that he speaks not of a carnal, but of a spiritual regeneration and birth; whereby we are begotten again to a lively hope, and are made the children of God: and so silenceth those impertinent impossibilities, on which Nicodemus insisted: *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he* can in no wise *enter into the kingdom of God.*

These words are a description of a Christian's New-Birth: which is here set forth both by the Efficient Cause of it, *Water* and *the Spirit:* and also by the absolute Necessity of it unto eternal life; without this no man can enter into the kingdom of God, that is, into heaven, the place where the throne of God's kingdom is established.

To *be born of water and of the Spirit,* may admit of a double interpretation: for either,

First. By Water is meant Baptism; the element being put for the ordinance, which is the sacrament of our regeneration: and thus you have it in Eph. v. 26. where the Church is said to be

sanctified and cleansed, through *the washing of water*. There is, indeed, a Baptismal Regeneration, whereby all, that are made partakers of that ordinance, are, according to Scripture language, sanctified, renewed, and made the children of God, and brought within the bond of the covenant: but all this is but after an external manner; as being, in this ordinance, entered members of the Visible Church. This external regeneration by water entitles none to eternal life; but, as the Spirit moves upon the face of these waters, and doth sometimes secretly convey quickening virtue through them.

Now if you take this being *born of water* to signify external regeneration in the ordinance of Baptism, the question will be, how it can be verified, that, without this, none can *enter into the kingdom of God.*

It was a mistake of some of the Fathers, and among them of St. Austin, who excluded all, both infants and adult, out of heaven that died without Baptism; although by no default of their own, but by an insuperable necessity; unless they were such as died martyrs, their being baptized with their own blood, as St. Austin speaks, serving them instead of baptism by water. But this opinion is unwarrantable, and contrary to the most received judgment of the Church in the Primitive Times: who, if they had thought this Baptismal Regeneration was indispensibly necessary to salvation, would not certainly have stinted and confined the administration of it only to two times of the year, Easter and Pentecost; thereby to bring upon themselves the blood of their souls, that should in that interim have died without Baptism. Therefore that opinion was rather private, than the public judgment of the Church, though learned men were of it.

Therefore, if you will understand Baptism by being *born of water,* if it be true that none are saved that are not *born of water;* we must distinguish of being unavoidably and inevitably deprived of the opportunity of Baptism, and a wilful contempt of it: and, in this latter sense, must our Saviour's assertion be understood. He, that contemns being born by Baptism, and out of that contempt finally neglects being baptised, shall never *enter into the kingdom of God:* but, for others, whom not contempt, but necessity, deprives of this ordinance, the want of it shall not in the least prejudice their salvation.

Secondly. To *be born of water and of the Spirit,* may denote to us the manner of the Spirit's proceeding in the work of regeneration. *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit:* that is, except he be renewed by the Holy Ghost, working as water; leaving the

same effect upon the soul in cleansing and purifying it from sinful defilements, as water doth upon the body in washing off contracted dirt and filth. Nor, indeed, is this manner of expression strange to the Holy Scriptures: for John Baptist, St. Matt. iii. 11, speaking of Christ, tells them, that he should baptize them *with the Holy Ghost and with fire:* that, is, he should baptize them with the Holy Ghost, working as fire: for, as fire eats out and consumes the rust and dross of metals; so those, that are baptized with the Spirit, are as it were plunged into that heavenly flame, whose searching energy devours all their dross, tin, and base alloy. So then, here also, to *be born of water and of the Spirit,* may be no more than to be born of the Spirit, purifying the soul, even as water purifies the body So variously is the efficiency of the Holy Ghost, in the work of regeneration, expressed in Scripture language: it consumes our dross as fire, and washeth off our filth as water.

These two interpretations may be given of the text, *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit:* that is, except he be externally regenerated by Baptism, when he hath such an opportunity to receive that ordinance, that nothing but his own wilful contempt of it can hinder it; and be also internally regenerated by the Spirit of God working a mighty and thorough change upon his heart; he shall never be saved. Or, again, it may be understood thus: Except a man be renewed by the efficacy of the Holy Ghost, cleansing the inward man from sin, as water cleanseth the outward man from filth, he shall never enter into heaven. In either of which senses you take it, the words will well bear it.

Having given you this explication of the words, for the more full and clear prosecution of this Doctrine of Regeneration, it wil be expedient to show you,

I. WHAT THIS NEW-BIRTH OR REGENERATION IS.

And that I shall do, both Negatively and Positively.

i. NEGATIVELY. And, here, to be Born Again or New-Born,

1. *Is not to have any essential change pass upon the essential parts of human nature.*

The essential parts of human nature I call the soul and body; which remain the same, for substance, after Regeneration, as they were before. Indeed Flagicius Illyricus, that held original sin to be of the substance of the soul, was driven by force of consequence also to affirm, that Regeneration made a change in the substance and essence of the soul: and the Familists, of late, have entertained strange and blasphemous conceits concerning Regeneration, as if it were a metamorphosis of the creature into the very being and

nature of God, making that change, that is wrought thereby, to be not so much a new creature, as a new deity. But these are wild and uncouth fancies: for, if Regeneration wrought any such change upon man, as that he is not now the same person regenerated, as he was unregenerated; how doth the Apostle say, 1 Tim. i. 13; I *was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious?* then also grace, instead of converting, destroyed the sinner; and, consequently, sinner yet was or shall be saved. But enough of this. Grace, therefore, makes no such physical change upon the natural being or essence of man: but the understanding, will, and affections are the same for nature and essence, in the regenerate as in the unregenerate; but only they are rectified and endowed with infused habits.

2. *Regeneration is not a conversion from an idolatrous and an erroneous way of worship, to the profession and ackowledgment of the true faith.*

Much less, then, is it not a conversion from one sect and party of Christians to another: as many ignorant persons suppose, that, when they are won over from one truth it may be to an error, presently they think they are converted by it, because they join in with another party of Christians. But there may be Proselytes gained over to the Church, either from Heathenism or from Popish Idolatry, whose souls notwithstanding may never be gained over unto Christ. As travellers, that come into a foreign land, still remain subjects to their natural lord: so these may come into the Church, which is the Kingdom of Christ upon Earth; and yet still remain slaves to their natural lord, the Devil. Indeed, I find in Scripture, that, when Christ and his Apostles laboured to convert the Jews or others unto the profession and acknowledgment of Christ, and to bring them to a thorough work of Regeneration, the chief thing that they insisted on was, to persuade them to believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, the Saviour of the World. Now, though this Dogmatical Faith is not Regeneration, yet it was then almost an infallible test of it; and, to persuade them to believe that Jesus was the Christ, was to prevail upon them to be truly and really converted. It was seldom seen among those Primitive Christians, where there were no carnal respects nor outward advantages that could commend the Gospel to the secular interests of men; when the only reward of professing Christ, was reproaches, persecution, and martyrdom: seldom was it seen, that any were won over from Heathenism or Judaism, to make profession of the despised name of Christ, but such, as were inwardly renewed by that almighty grace, that can conquer all the despites and affronts

of the world: few were so foolish as to profess Christ in hypocrisy, when that hypocrisy, would endanger their own lives; and yet, because it was but in hypocrisy, it could gain them no benefit by his death. Therefore it is, that the Scripture speaks of those, that made a profession of the name of Christ, as if they were regenerated, because it was then almost an infallible mark of it: thus you have it in 1 John iv. 15. *Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God:* so, again, in chap. v. 1; He, that *believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.* But now, when the very name of a Christian is become a title of honour, and the same punishments do now attend the denying of Christ that then attended the acknowledgment of him, men may indeed be called by his name that never were effectually called by his grace, and may make a profession of the true faith and yet remain Christian Infidels.

3. *The reformation of a dissolute and debauched life, falls short of this spiritual New-Birth.*

This is that, with which many do soothe up themselves, when they reflect back upon the wild extravagances of their former times: how outrageously wicked they were; drunkards, unclean, riotous, blasphemers, swearers, and the very worst of sinners: and, now that they find themselves deadened to these things, and that they are grown men of stayed and sober lives and conversations, straight they conclude, that, certainly, such a great change as this is could never be made on them otherwise than by a renewing work of the Spirit: and, yet, this amendment there may be, where there is no Regeneration. Men may gather up their loose and dissolute lives within the compass of civility and moral honesty, and yet they may be utter strangers to a work of true and saving grace: and this may be ascribed to two grounds; partly, to the convictions of God's Spirit awakening natural conscience to see the horror, and to foresee the danger, that is in such infamous sins; and, partly, to prudence, gained from the frequent experiences that they have had of the manifold inconveniences brought upon themselves by such sins formerly. These two may make a great amendment in men's lives and conversations; and, yet, both these convictions and prudence fall far short of true regenerating grace.

All the seeming amendment of such men's lives may be effected two ways: either by changing their sins, or by tiring out the sinner.

(1) The life may seem to be reformed, when men only change their rude and boisterous sins, for such as are more demure and sober.

When men, from riotous, grow worldly; when from profane and irreligious, they grow superstitious and hypocritical; from atheists, to be heretics; when men make this change of boisterous and roaring sins, for those that are more demure and sober, they are apt to think that this change must be a change of their natures: whereas, indeed, it is but only a changing and bartering of their sins; and usually it is such a change too, that, though it render the life more inoffensive, yet it makes the soul more incurable. St. Austin, long since, hath told us, That vices may give place, when yet no virtue takes it; but one vice gives place to another.

(2) The life may seem to be reformed, when men are only tired out with the sins, or have outgrown their sins.

There are sins, that are proper and peculiar to such a state and season of a man's life, upon the altering of which they vanish and disappear. The sins of youth drop off in declining age, being then incongruous. This is that, which deceives many: when they look back upon those numberless vanities that they have forsaken and shaken off, and find how deadened their hearts are to those sinful ways which before they delighted in, they conclude, that, certainly, this great change must needs proceed from true grace; whereas, indeed, they do not leave their sins but their sins leave them, and drop off from them as rotten fruit from a tree: the faculties of their souls and the members of their bodies, that before were instruments of sin unto unrighteousness, are it may be blunted and become unserviceable. This maim of nature is far from regenerating grace: that doth not disable a man from the service of sin; but only sets him free from it.

4. *To be endowed with eminent gifts and with the common graces of the Spirit, is not to be Regenerated.*

These may be bestowed upon the worst of men. There is grace, that renders a man lovely in God's eyes; and there is grace, that renders a man lovely only in men's eyes. Of both these, one and the same Spirit is the author. In some, the Spirit sanctifies the heart; and, in others, it only illuminates the head. Balaam was irradiated with the supernatural light of prophecy. Judas was dignified with the extraordinary office of the apostleship; and sent out to work miracles, together with the rest of the Apostles.

Yea, so much are the gifts of the Spirit, the operations of the Spirit, that they are, in a peculiar manner, called the Holy Ghost himself. See this in Acts i. 4. Christ commands his Disciples there, to wait at Jerusalem *for the promise of the Father:* that is for the gifts of the Spirit; for that was the promise of the Father: and

he tells them, in the eighth verse, that they should *receive power after that the Holy Ghost* was *come upon* them: certain it is, that they had already received the Holy Ghost, in the sanctifying graces of it: we cannot think that they were in an unregenerate, unconverted estate, after Christ's death; but they had not as yet received the plentiful effusion of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, of speaking with tongues, of a bold and ready utterance, of working of miracles, and the like, which were then necessary to qualify them for the successful spreading of a new doctrine. And this is more clear in Acts viii., when Philip preached at Samaria, it is said he converted many, in verse 12, so that, doubtless, many of them had received the Spirit already, in its saving graces; and yet it is said, in verse 16, that the Holy Ghost was not yet fallen upon any of them: that is, though they were converted, yet they were not endowed with those wonderful gifts of the Spirit before mentioned, which afterwards they received. Had we been among them, and heard them speak of Christ and Gospel Mysteries with affections and convictions beyond natural capacities; had we heard them speak unstudied languages, and seen them working miracles, healing the sick, raising the dead; could we have thought, that it was possible for any of those, who were so favoured and filled by the Holy Ghost, to be yet in an unregenerate state, in a state of wrath and damnation? Yet, that there might some of them be so is clear: for the Apostle speaks of the like; such, who had *tasted of the heavenly gift and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,* and yet might *fall away,* Heb. vi. 4, 6: that, is, there were those, in those Primitive Times, that had an effusion of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost poured out upon them; of speaking with tongues, of a bold and ready utterance, of working of miracles, and the like; and yet such as these, that had tasted of these heavenly gifts, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, fell away, that is, they were never truly regenerate.

And, certainly, if these extraordinary gifts might be found separate from true grace, much more may those inferior gifts, that the Spirit now dispenseth among Christians be without true regenerating grace. A man may discourse of spiritual mysteries copiously and clearly: he may have gifts of knowledge and utterance: he may preach with evidence and demonstration, and pray with enlargement and affection; and yet, notwithstanding all this, be an utter stranger to a saving work of grace. Gifts prove nothing: these gifts may be but the gilding of a rotten post, the varnish of a corrupt heart. As it was a custom of old to crown those beasts'

heads with garlands of flowers, that were ordained to be a sacrifice: so God may sometimes crown the heads of wicked men with flowery parts and gifts, whom yet he intends to make a sacrifice of to his wrath and justice.

5. *A civil and harmless demeanor, is not this state of Regeneration.*

There are many, that are of a good nature, that live blamelessly as to the world, and that nearly resemble grace: such as St. Paul was; who, speaking of himself saith, *touching the Law, he was blameless:* and such was the young man in the Gospel, that came to Christ and demanded what further lesson he should take out; having obeyed all the commands, as he thought: and, yet, this also is short of the regenerating grace of the Spirit, and argues only a sweet disposition, not a gracious heart.

And thus you see how easily men may mistake themselves in the great work of regeneration, upon which depends their eternal happiness; for, *Except a man be born again,* he shall never see *the kingdom of God:* and yet it is too much to be feared, that many, yea very many, rest upon these things; and think the great determining change is certainly wrought upon them, only because they are morally honest, or eminently gifted, or much reformed, or gained over to the profession of the truth with such a sect or party of professors; whereas, indeed, the New-Birth consists in none of all these things.

ii. Briefly, therefore, to inform you WHAT IT IS, you may take it thus:

REGENERATION IS A CHANGE OF THE WHOLE MAN, IN EVERY PART AND FACULTY THEREOF, FROM A STATE OF SINFUL NATURE, TO A STATE OF SUPERNATURAL GRACE; WHEREBY THE IMAGE OF GOD, THAT WE DEFACED AND LOST BY OUR FIRST TRANSGRESSION, IS AGAIN, IN SOME GOOD MEASURE, RESTORED.

1. Now, as every science hath its *Proper Terms,* that are as so many keys to unlock the mysteries contained in it: so, especially, divinity abounds with terms, that are peculiar to its own doctrine; and, in no one point, more than in this of the great change, that a sinner undergoes, when he is translated from a state of nature to a state of grace.

That grace, that concurs unto this great change, is of two sorts:

Either such, as alters the relations, wherein we stand unto God; or such, as alters the dispositions and habit of our souls.

Of the former sort, are Election, which is antecedent to our Faith; and Reconciliation, Justification, Adoption, and Mystical Union, which are consequents unto it. Of these graces it is not my busi-

ness now to treat, because they lodge only in the breast of God; and their formal effect is not a supernatural infusing of any new habits or principles, but only of new relations. When we speak of a person justified and adopted, the true adequate notion of these terms doth not declare how his heart is changed towards God, but, if I may so speak, how God's heart is changed towards him; not that he stands otherwise affected unto God, but otherwise related to God, than formerly: of a guilty malefactor, he becomes acquitted and accepted, by the grace of Justification; and, of an alien, he becomes a son and heir, by the grace of Adoption.

But then there are other graces, that are inherent in us, and work a mighty change in our moral habits and principles; and whereby we also, though not so properly, are denominated gracious. God is denominated gracious, by the grace of Justification, Adoption, Mystical Union, and Election: and we are denominated gracious, by the habitual graces, that his Spirit infuseth into us and worketh in us. And these are every where besparkled up and down in the Scripture, where it speaks of Faith, Love, Patience, Self denial, Meekness, Knowledge, Temperance, and the rest of them: these, as so many stars, ought continually to shine forth in a Christian's life, and, though they may appear very differently, some obscure and cloudy and others bright and glittering, some at one season setting and others at another season rising, yet they all make up but one constellation, whereby we are *translated*, as the Scripture speaks, *out of darkness into marvellous light.*

Now the framing of this complexion or body of grace in the heart, is that, which we call Regeneration; it being a fixed constellation of all the several graces of the Spirit in the heart.

The Scripture gives it divers other appellations. It is called the *new man*, in Eph. iv. 24: the *new creature:* Gal. vi. 15: a transformation into the image of God: 2 Cor. iii. 18: a participation *of the divine nature:* 2 Pet. i. 4: and, in other places, too long to be insisted on now, it is called Conversion, Effectual Calling, Sanctification, and Renovation: and sometimes, too, it is termed by the name of two principal graces, the two greatest limbs of the New Man, Faith and Repentance, which are often put for the whole work of Regeneration.

All these expressions set forth the same work of grace upon the heart, though they may be understood under different notions. The New Man denotes the greatness and entireness of the change. The New Creature denotes that almighty power, whereby that entire change is wrought. The Image of God and the Divine Nature de-

note that conformity, that is thereby made in us to the holy will and nature of God. Effectual Calling and Conversion denote our returning to God, after our wandering and straying from him. Sanctification denotes that influence, which this great change hath to set us apart for God from common uses; for sanctification, in propriety of speech, signifies a separation of a person or thing from profane and ordinary uses to the service and glory of God: indeed Sanctification doth, in strictness of speech, differ from Regeneration, though commonly we use them promiscuously; for Regeneration is the implanting of the habits and principles of grace, but Sanctification is properly the strengthening and increasing of them: it is the progress, that a holy soul makes, when it passes on from one degree of grace to another.

Regeneration is, in nature, before Justification; but Sanctification follows it.

And, hence, we may observe the order, in which the Apostle rangeth them in that famous place, that climax, in Rom. viii. 29, 30, where every grace is a round of the *scala cæli*, that Jacob's ladder, whereby we ascend up to heaven. It is a place, if any in the Book of God, that deserves our most serious thoughts. Says the Apostle, *Whom he did foreknow*, them *he also did predestinate.* If you ask wherein God's prescience and foreknowledge differ from predestination, a question that hath caused much strife, I answer: Prescience here respects the end: predestination respects the means, how to obtain it. So that the sense is this: Whom God foreknew that he would save, them he did predestinate to the means of salvation. He hath predestinated us, says the Apostle, that we might *be conformed to the image of his Son:* that is, he pre estinated them to grace, which is the way and means to glory. So, then where it is said whom God foreknew, that signifies God's purpose and intention of saving some: where it is said, those he did predestinate, that signifies God's purpose of calling those, whom he did intend to save, unto the knowledge of his Son, and to the means whereby he might save them. It follows, *Whom he did predestinate, them he also called:* that is, with an effectual call, which is the same with regeneration: whom he predestinated, them he regenerated; *and whom he* thus *called,* or regenerated, *them he also justified.* Here you see Justification is put after Regeneration, though, indeed, in order of nature, it follows Regeneration: for we are justified by faith; now faith is part of that new nature, that is bestowed upon us in Regeneration: we are justified by faith; wherefore faith is before our Justification, and is part of our Regeneration. The Apostle now proceeds to the

last link of this golden chain: *Whom he* justifies, *them he also* glorifies: where we may observe, that it is at least probable, that the glorification, that the Apostle here speaks of, may not be the Glory of Heaven, because he speaks of it as a thing already past and done; whom he hath justified he hath glorified: we may, without offering violence to the words, interpret it of Sanctification; whom he hath justified, them he hath glorified, that is sanctified: so that glorification here is no more than Sanctification; for Sanctification is also called glory, in 2 Cor. iii. 18. We also *beholding.....the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord;* from glory to glory, that is, from one degree of Sanctification to another; for, indeed, holiness, that is our Sanctification, and the glory of heaven, are but one and the same thing for substance, differing in degrees and circumstances.

So much now for the Names, whereby this great change is called.

2. Let us now proceed to consider the *Nature* of it.

Which, because it is a mutation of the whole man, we cannot better do, than by considering the terms, both from which and to which, this mutation or change passeth.

Let us, therefore, first take a view what man is, in his unregenerate state; and, then, behold him, as he is new, and as he bears the glorious lineaments of God's image upon his soul.

(1) In his Unregenerate State.

I shall not consider him, as he is obnoxious to divine wrath and vengeance; for, so, he is a child of wrath, an heir of hell and perdition. But I shall consider him, as he stands alienated from the divine holiness and purity; and as he is despoiled of all those choice perfections, wherewith his nature was at first endowed.

And, here, give me leave to represent to your eyes a wretched and sad spectacle. Whose bowels cannot but yearn, to read that description, which the Prophet makes, Ezek. xvi. 4, 5, of a poor, forsaken infant, swathed in its own blood, cast out into the open field, helpless for its own weakness, and loathsome for its deformity? This is the very emblem of what we ourselves are, in our unregeneracy; cast out to the loathing of our persons, rolling ourselves in our own filth, and impotent that we cannot help ourselves.

But I shall not stand to represent it to you in generals. To came therefore to particulars, I shall give you these following positions; which may clear up, both wherein consists the state of unregeneracy, and also the misery of such a state.

[1] The corruption of an unregenerate state consists, in blotting out the Divine image; that resemblance of God, which was stamped upon our souls in our first creation.

What the Image of God is, I shall more clearly show you afterwards; and how it is again restored to us in Regeneration. In the mean time, it may suffice, that, by the Image of God, I mean those spiritual habits of knowledge and holiness, that were conferred on Adam in his first creation, and on us in him. These habits were natural to him, and concreated with him; whereby his understanding was raised to a clear and satisfying knowledge of divine truths, and his will inclined to a free and unforced performance of divine and spiritual actions: in this consisted a great part of the Image of God. It consisted also, in the harmonious subordination of the inferior faculties to the superior; the will being subject to the dictates of the understanding, and the affections subject to the commands and sovereignty of the will. But, now, all this is lost: in our unregenerate state we are deprived of it; and there is nothing, but ruin and an undigested chaos left in an unregenerate soul. Darkness covers the face of the understanding, that great deep; and disorders and tumults sway the affections contrary to the guidance of the will, and these sway the will contrary to the dictates of reason: so that it is a state of mere confusion, disorder, and rebellion; as of man against God, so also of man against himself. It is a state of utter blindness and impotency: When we were weak, then God sent his Son in the likeness of flesh. Yea, it is not only a state of weakness, but it is also a state of spiritual death: *You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:* Eph. ii. 1.

[2] The corruption of an unregenerate state consists, in our aversion from God, and in our inordinate conversion to the creature.

And this necessarily follows, upon the loss of God's Image. The soul of man is still an active, busy creature; and must still be putting itself forth in actions suitable to its own nature. Now while it did enjoy God's Image, it had power to point every motion of the soul to God, and to fix upon God both as the object and end of all its actions, and that made them all to be holy and divine: but, being now deprived of the Image of God, the soul grovels here below; and, instead of aspiring unto God, pitches its affections and thoughts only upon the creature: and this becomes sin and misery to it; not because it affects the creature simply, but because it affects the creature in an inordinate manner, that is, without affecting God the Creator. Briefly and plainly, the soul must have an inclination and propension, one way or other: to incline to the obeying and loving of God, it cannot now, without the Image of God, that should raise up the affections of the soul to a spiritual pitch. Now this Image of God we are deprived of, and that justly

too, by our Fall: and, therefore, now the whole bent and inclination of the soul, that ought to be carried out to God, but cannot, pitcheth upon what it can, and that is upon the creature; those things, that please the carnal sensual appetite, and that in an inordinate manner, to the neglect and slighting, yea to the contempt and hating, of God. And this is the state of the soul in its unregeneracy.

[3] This corruption of an unregenerate state is spread over every power and faculty of the soul; not one escaping the contagion of it.

But, yet, as the sea is called by divers names, according to the divers countries and shores that it flows along by; so also this corruption of our nature is termed diversely, according to the divers faculties and powers of the soul that it hath depraved. In the understanding, it is called blindness and darkness; in the will, stubbornness and perverseness: in the affections, it is called disorder, sensuality, and irregularity: and yet, still, it is the same corruption of unregeneracy, in every one of them, the same body of sin and death; though styled thus diversely, according to the divers faculties that it doth infect.

[4] This corruption of an unregenerate state is unweariedly working out itself, in every act and motion of our souls.

Not so much as one good thought could ever yet escape to heaven free from it. It is as a corrupt fountain, continually sending forth corrupt and bitter streams; and, though these streams take several courses, and wander severally into several ways and channels, yet they all taste of the same brackishness: so, though the soul is various in its actions, yet all its actions have a taint and relish from the same corruption, that corruption that hath tainted the fountain.

[5] Hence it follows, that, whatsoever an unregenerate man doth, it becomes sin to him.

And that, whether you consider his religious, or his civil and ordinary actions. If you take the most splendid and gorgeous duty of an unregenerate man, when it is performed with the most pomp, when his affections are most upon the wing, when he is in the highest elevation of soul; yet this glittering duty is nothing else but the steam and reeking of corruption, and so becomes offensive unto God, there being nothing of grace in it to perfume it. Hence the Psalmist speaks, in Psal. cix. 7; *Let his prayer become sin:* and, says the Wise Man, *The* prayer *of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord;* Prov. xv. 8. The best duties of unregenerate men are no better, in God's account and acceptance, than abomination, the *cutting off a dog's neck,* or as *the offering up of swine's blood,*

or whatever else the soul of God doth most abhor; and how then might such unregenerate men wish themselves rather stocks or stones, senseless and unacted things, than such as they are, men of vigorous and active principles; since every imagination of their hearts, and every motion of their souls, is only evil before God! There is nothing, that such men do, in the whole course of their lives, but, at the Last Day, it will be found in God's register-book among the catalogue of their sins. Yea, even their commendable and necessary actions: *The plowing of the wicked,* says the Wise Man, *is an abomination to the Lord:* this man eats and drinks, plows and sleeps, and hath done so many thousands of such and such natural actions; but he hath done them in a state of unregeneracy, and therefore they stand all upon the account for so many thousand sins. Nay, he hath prayed so often, and heard so often, made so many prayers, and heard so many sermons, and done many good works; but yet, all this while, he was in an unconverted estate: these, therefore, are set down in God's day-book, in black; and they are registered among those sins, that he must give an account for, not for the substance of the actions themselves, but because they come from rotten principles, that defile the best actions which he can perform. His eating, as well as his gluttony; his drinking, as well as his drunkenness; his converse, negotiation, and trafficing, as well as his covetousness, and inordinate love of the world; are all set down, and reckoned by God for sins, and such sins as he must reckon for with God.

I speak not these things to discourage any, that may suspect themselves to be in an unconverted estate, from the performance either of the duties of religion, or the necessary and civil affairs of this life: you cannot possibly sit still and do nothing: or, if you do sit still and do nothing, yet your idleness will be a sin. But I speak this only to show the absolute necessity of Regeneration; for, without this inward principle of grace, no action, how moral, how precious, how religious or necessary soever, but will be catalogued down in God's day-book among the number of men's sins.

(2) Having now considered the *terminum a quo,* from which we pass to this great change, let us now consider what it is, that we acquire by the term to which we pass. And that I told you, when I gave you the description of Regeneration, is the Image of God. Of this I spake somewhat before, but shall now do it more fully.

The image of God is taken, in Scripture, in two senses.

First. For the Essential and Coeternal Image of God the Father. And, so, Christ is called the Image of God, in Col. i. 15. He *is the*

*image of the invisible God,* says the Apostle. So also, Heb. i. 3. He is *the brightness of his glory,* that is, of God's glory; and he is *the express image of his person.* Indeed, it is infinitely past our reach, to conceive what a wonderful impression that was, that stamped the Image of the Father upon the Son, in such a sort, as to be the same in substance and duration with the original itself.

Secondly. Therefore, to come nearer to our purpose, the Image of God is taken sometimes, in Scripture, for that Resemblance of God, that is upon the Soul of Man. And so it is said, in Gen. i. 27; that *God created man in his own image.* Now, to be this image, implies two things. First: a likeness and similitude, that man bears unto God. Secondly: it implies, that God made himself the pattern and exemplar, when he drew this likeness of himself upon man. Two things, or two persons may be like each to other, which yet properly are not said to be the one the image of the other, unless the one be made purposely to resemble and represent the other: as milk is said to be like milk, but yet one part is not said to be image of the other. So, then, when it is said, *God made man after his own image,* it implies a likeness in him unto God; and it implies also, that this likeness is wrought in him by God, purposely to resemble him.

Now, here, to clear our passage, I shall consider Three things.

Wherein the Image of God consisted, in which man was, in his primitive state, created. What parts of that Image are lost and defaced by the Fall; and what of it still remains upon the soul. And, What of that Image is again renewed and restored, in our Regeneration.

[1] What that primitive Image of God was, in which he created man. I answer Negatively and Positively.

1st. Negatively. The image of God doth not consist in any corporeal resemblance of him, or bodily similitude to him.

For our bodies, though they are of an admirable composure, yet they carry in them no resemblance of God, who is a spirit, and who is *the God of the spirits of all flesh.* The learned do well distinguish, betwixt *Imago,* and *Vestigium Dei.* There are *quædam vestigia Dei,* "certain footsteps of God," printed upon every creature; by the tracing of which footsteps, we may find out his infinite *power and godhead,* as the Apostle speaks. Thus, there is not the least pile of grass but points upwards to God, as its wise and powerful Maker: there is not the least leaf, but hath written upon it the wisdom and power of God. Every creature, brute and inanimate, bears the print of God's footsteps upon it. And, of this rank, are our bodies;

bearing upon them *quædam vestigia*, some footsteps and tracks of God: and, by how much the more wonderfully they are framed and organized, in which respect the Psalmist saith, *I am fearfully and wonderfully made;* by so much the more discernible are the footsteps of God seen in our bodies, than in the bodies of other creatures: but yet this is not sufficient to make them Images of God; for they have not in themselves any resemblance of the divine nature, neither are they spirits nor intellectual substances as God is; and therefore, though they are said to bear the print of God's footsteps, yet they are not said to bear God's Image: indeed there were some, that were called Anthropomorphites, that fancied God to be corporeal; and that ascribed to him all members in propriety, that the Scripture ascribed to him in condescension, as hands, head, eyes, and feet, and the like; and, consequently, thought that God framed man's body, according to the image of his own: but this is a stupid error; and a heathen orator had more true information in this point, when he tells us, That the virtues of man make him to be more like to God, than his shape doth: so, then, it is not the body of man, that is the Image of God.

2dly. Positively. And so we may take notice, that the Image of God consists,

(1st) In such perfections, as are spiritual: I say, in such spiritual perfections, as are essential and necessary to man as man: such as the rational soul itself, together with those powers and faculties that are necessarily subjected and seated in it; as the understanding, will, and affections.

For, by these, man may be said to bear the Image of God, because these have in them some faint glimpses and shadows of divine essence. The soul is a spirit; and so is God: the soul is an intellectual and free agent; and so is God. Indeed the resemblance betwixt God and us, even in this very thing in which we bear some resemblance of God, is infinitely unsearchable and great. Mark that place, for the confirmation of this, in Gen. ix. 6. He, that *sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.* Wherein lies the force of this reason? Do not all affirm, that man lost the Image of God, by his sin and fall? Or, did God hereby intend to secure the lives of the regenerate, that have this image again restored to them? No, but the weight of the reason lies in this, that every man, whether regenerate or wicked, still bears the Image of God, even in this, that he hath a spiritual soul, and that he hath an intellectual mind, that he hath a free and self-determining will: and, therefore, whosoever murders

man deserves death, because he murders God in *Effigies;* he murders the Image of God. This now is one part of the Image of God; the spiritual soul, and the rational powers and faculties of it.

(2dly) Another part of God's Image consists in those habitual perfections of man's human nature, that were not essential to him: but rather ornamentive; and necessary, not simply to his being, but rather to his well-being.

To make man a rational creature, it was simply necessary to breathe into him a rational soul; and it was also necessary, that that rational soul should be endowed with faculties, with understanding, will, and affections.

But, over and above these necessary things, God gave him righteous habits, that might rectify those faculties: and these are Three:

[1st] God darted into his Understanding a clear and exact knowledge; not only of those things that are natural, but of those things that are divine also.

Of his knowledge in things that are natural, we have a clear instance; when, as all creatures passed before Adam as servants to do homage to their lord, he was able, by a transient view and intuition of them, to give them all names according to their several natures. And his knowledge of the divine nature appeared hence, because his love of him was perfect: and how could he love God, if he had not known him? Now, in this particular of knowledge, man nearly resembled God, in his first estate: for God's infinite delight is in the knowledge and contemplation of himself, and of his works; and so also was man's. But yet this knowledge was not omniscience; for there were many things, doubtless, that man was then ignorant of: but he knew whatever was necessary and expedient for him to know; and that was sufficient for the happiness of his estate, and for the end for which he was created.

[2dly] Man's will was endowed with a habitual proneness and inclination to all good.

There were then no such bandyings in his will, as now the holiest saints complain of: but the will clasped about every good and holy object, that was presented to its choice; and that it did, freely and fully, with entireness and delight.

[3dly] His Affections also were all holy, and all of them subject to his holy will.

Now, the best complain, it is seldom that they will what is good: and when they have a will to it, yet they cannot do what they would: the good, which they would do, they cannot do. But, in our first blessed estate, there was a harmonious obedience, in all

the passions and in all the faculties of the soul, unto the command of the will, without the least tumult or disorder. There were, indeed, motions of the affections and passions in Adam, as of love, hope, joy, and the like; but it was, as some divines express it, as the bubbling of clean water in a clear chrystal vial, that raised no defilement: whereas, now, it is in us like the working of the sea, that casteth out mire and filth.

These affections were under the command of the will then; and that, both as to the continuance and as to the degrees of them.

a. As to the continuance of them.

The will might command them on and off, at its pleasure. They fixed upon nothing, but what holiness directed them to: and they made their stay no longer, than the same holiness commanded. Like the Centurion's Servants, they went and came at the word of their superior.

b. As to the degrees of them.

Now we find it a hard task, to set bounds to our love, fear, joy, and the like: we cannot give way to them, without running into strange excesses and intemperance: our love is become fondness: our joy is become wantonness: our fear is turned into a chilling ague: and our anger into a burning fever. But, in our first blessed estate, all these passions were guided by holy reason: both for their objects, upon which they ought to fix; and also for their measures, how far they ought to let forth themselves.

And thus I have opened the first proposal; delineating to you obscurely the Divine Image: for the best and most comprehensive notions and words of men can but obscurely trace out the tracks, lines, and figures of the glorious Image of God, which the creating finger of the Almighty at first drew upon the soul of man; which, when we compare it with the ruins and rubbish of our present state of misery, may administer just cause of shame, grief, and sorrow.

[2] Let us now consider, what parts of this Image are lost and defaced by our Fall; and what of it still remains in every man, as well unregenerate as regenerate.

1st. That part of the Image of God, that consisted in those things that are essential to man, is not lost.

As the soul; and its faculties of understanding, will, and affections: these still remain the same, for substance, as they did before.

2dly. Some unregenerate men retain many rare natural perfections of these faculties.

Some of them grow up in all ornamentive, excellent parts; searching judgments, deep knowledge: when others are born fools

and idiots, and are deprived of the use of common reason. Now though reason and knowledge, even in natural things, be some part of God's Image, that all men have equally forfeited; yet God is pleased to restore this, in a great measure, sometimes, to some unregenerate men, when he denies it to others: yea, it may be, his own children do not enjoy it in the same degree. This part of God's Image is dispensed, in common, both to good and bad; and, many times, the wicked have a greater share in it than the holy. These gifts, though they bear some weak and obscure resemblance of God, he keeps in the hands of his Common Providence; and scatters upon the generality of men, in some measure: unto these we have all lost a right and title, but we have not all lost the actual possession of them; but God restores them to unregenerate men, as he pleaseth.

3dly. As for that part of the Image of God, that consists in holy habits, in spiritual knowledge and righteousness, these we have utterly lost and defaced.

The mind is become palpably dark; muffled up in error and ignorance: the will and affections are violently and unwearicdly bent upon the pursuit only of what is evil. And this is the misery of our Fall: thus, is our glory stained, and our silver become dross.

[3] Let us now consider, what of the Image of God is again restored to us, in our Regeneration.

1st. To this I answer, briefly: Regeneration restores to us that part of God's Image, that consists in holy and spiritual habits, that rectify the operations of our natural faculties and powers.

The mind is illuminated with true knowledge: the will is made compliant to God's will; and the affections are called off from the pursuit of vanity, and set upon spiritual and heavenly objects. And this is that Image of God, that is drawn upon our souls in our Regeneration, whereby we are made like to God; yea, so like to him, that the Apostle, in 2 Pet. i. 4, calls it, a participation *of the divine nature.* There are, indeed, some strictures and beams of the holiness of God himself shining in a regenerate soul; though infinitely more weak and waterish, than those in God's infinitely holy essence. And, here, observe Two things.

(1st) That, in the very instant of our Regeneration, all the graces of the Holy Spirit are implanted in us, at once: for they are all linked together; and whoever receives any one grace, receives them all.

There are faith and love, and the fear of God, and patience, and humility, and self-denial, and the rest of the train of glorious

graces: for each of these is a lineament and feature of the Divine Image, without which it were not complete. And, therefore, that Christian, that can but find any one grace wrought and acted in him by the Spirit of God, may comfortably conclude that he hath all other graces, at least in the habits and principles of them: they may all be weak, indeed: but, yet, not any one of them is wanting And it may also serve to stir us up, since we have graces of all sorts that lie latent within us, not to yield to any corruption or temptation: as that with which we cannot grapple, so as to come off with victory and conquest: for our Regeneration furnishes us with all grace; and there is no particular sin, but we may within ourselves find a particular grace opposite to it, if we would but stir up and rouse it.

(2dly) Observe also, That the Holy Ghost is, in a peculiar way, the author of this our conformity and similitude unto God.

For he it is, that, according to the œconomy and dispensation of the Blessed Trinity, begets us after the image and likeness of God. And, therefore, the text speaks of being *born of the Spirit.* And, so, in Scripture, we have frequent mention made of the Seal of the Spirit: 2 Cor. i. 22, and Eph. i. 13. Now a seal doth two things: it not only confirms the deed, to which it is annexed; but it also conforms the wax, upon which the seal is imprinted, to receive its own stamp and image. So, when the Spirit of God doth *incubare animæ,* when it "rests upon the soul," it casts and moulds it into its own image and shape; and, of a fleshly carnal soul, it makes it become spiritual, like to itself: and therefore says our Saviour, in John iii. 6; *That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit;* because the Spirit of God begets in its own likeness. It is like the seal on the wax, that leaves its stamp upon it: so, the soul being sealed by the Spirit, it leaves its own stamp and impression upon it.

2dly. But, betwixt that Image of God, which the Spirit stamps upon us, in our Regeneration; and that Image of God, in which we were created; there is a twofold difference observable.

(1st) That Image of God, which is restored to us in our Regeneration, though it hath a perfection of parts, yet hath not a perfection of degrees.

The Image of God, in which man was at first created, had them both: it included all graces; and it included them all, in their height and in their glory. Now, though the regenerate are as extensively holy as Adam was; and have as many graces, yea more too, as some think, than ever Adam had: yet they are not intensively so holy, as he was; but their graces are allayed with a mixture of

sin and corruption. Their knowledge is not so comprehensive; but it is subject to ignorance and errors: their will is not so perfectly guided by the will of God; but, sometimes, it hath eccentrical motions of their own: and their affections are not so refined; but that, sometimes, they are inordinate and earthly. Yea, and every faculty and every action are interwoven and intercheckered with grace and sin: so that, at once, the soul, though it be regenerate, yet bears a double image, God's and Satan's: it bears God's image, in its regenerate part; and the Devil's, in its unregenerate part. The best men are like your plaited pictures: wherein, if you look on one side, you may see an angel; and, if you look on the other side of the light, you may see a devil: so, truly, if you look upon the renewed and regenerate part of a child of God, that is angelical, and bears some glimmerings and resemblances of the Image of God upon it; but, if you turn your eyes on the corrupt and unregenerate part, what appears there, but blackness and deformity, that shadow out the very Image of Satan?

(2dly) The Image of God, restored to us in our Regeneration, differs from that, wherein we were first created, in this, that it shall never be totally lost and effaced, as the other was; and, herein, it excels the other.

You see how soon Adam lost his. One sin brought such a great blot upon it, that it was no longer discernible for the Image of God. But, now, though this Image shine not in such bright and orient colours as that did; yet are they more lasting and durable colours, than the former image had. Yea, though the regenerate commit many sins, that stain and sully it: yet the Spirit of God still refresheth it, by the continual influences of his grace; and will preserve it entire, that, in that great day when God shall come to examine every soul, "Whose image and superscription do you bear?" it may indeed be seen, that we bear the Image of God, and may be owned by him as his children, and as those that belong to him.

The forming of this Image of God on the soul, is the product of the New-Birth.

iii. Now, in that the Scripture calls the restoring of this image of God, a NEW-BIRTH; it will be expedient to consider WHAT THIS METAPHOR, TO BE BORN AGAIN, DOTH IMPORT.

And, here, I shall touch upon some remarkable resemblances, that are betwixt a Natural and a Spiritual Birth, between our First and our Second Birth.

1. To be born again implies, *that, as no man can bestow upon him*

*self a natural being; so, much less, can any man bestow upon himself a supernatural being.*

What! where were all of us a hundred years since? All in that vast wilderness of nothing; all sleeping in our own causes: we ourselves not having then so much existence, as our very dreams have now: and could we awake ourselves out of that sleep? could we procure our own being? could we fetch from heaven those sparks of divine fire, those souls of ours which are now kindled in our breasts? could we ourselves tie that vital knot betwixt our souls and bodies? No more, certainly, can any carnal, natural man, that is as much nothing in grace as we before we were born were mere nothings in nature, call down into his soul from heaven that living and active principle of grace, that should make him a new man and a new creature.

And therefore the Scripture chooseth to express this New-Birth, by such terms, as do import in us an utter impossibility and impotency to effect it by our own power. It is called the quickening of the dead, in Eph. ii. 1; *You hath he quickened,* says the Apostle, *who were dead in trespasses and sins.* Look, how impossible it is, for a dead man, that is shut down under the bars of the grave, that is crumbled away into dust and ashes, to pick up again every scattered dust, and form them again into the same members; and how impossible it is for him to breathe without a soul, or to breathe that soul into himself: alike impossible is it, for a natural man, who hath lain many years in the death of sin, to shake off from himself that spiritual death; or to breathe into himself that spiritual and heavenly life, that may make him a living soul before God. Moreover, the grace of Regeneration is said to be created in us, in Eph. iv. 24; *Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness:* in creation, the creature is formed out of nothing; and what can nothing contribute to being? Such is every natural man: he is mere nothing in respect of grace! and, therefore, can work nothing of grace in himself. Thus you see the Scripture carries it, that, no more than a child can beget itself, or a dead man quicken himself, or a non-entity create itself; no more can any carnal man regenerate himself, or work true saving grace in his own soul.

Indeed, there are a growing number of men, who think that Regeneration is the effect of free-will, and that it is in our own power to convert and renew ourselves. Though it be abundant confutation of this spreading error, that it is against the common sense and experience of true Christians; who, as they sadly complain of

the averseness of their wills to what is good, even after Regeneration, so they have found that, before their Regeneration, the greatest obstacle to it was the stubbornness and refractoriness of their own wills, that would never be brought to any terms of compliance with divine grace, had not the Spirit of God, by a sweet and irresistible efficacy, at once both persuaded and subdued them; though this now were sufficient, yet let me add one argument, which I think is unanswerable. If an unregenerate man can, by his own power, regenerate himself, then one of these two absurdities must necessarily follow; either that there are still left some holy habits and principles in the will, that were never lost by the Fall; or, else, that man may make himself truly holy, by a will that is totally corrupt and sinful: but it is very gross to admit either of these.

(1) There are no holy habits or principles left in a carnal man, whereby he should be able to convert and regenerate himself.

For what holy habits can there be in the will of a corrupt man, unless they are true graces? And, to affirm that man, in a state of nature, hath true grace inherent in him, whereby he is able to convert and regenerate himself, is dull nonsense, and a flat contradiction; for it is to affirm, that he hath grace before he hath grace.

(2) A corrupt will cannot make a holy man.

If there be no such habits and principles left in the will since the Fall, then the will must be totally corrupt; and a corrupt will cannot make a holy man: grace is above and beyond its sphere. Yea, an unregenerate will, in all its inclinations, is utterly contrary unto grace: there is not any one act of the will, but it is evil and sinful: and it is strange divinity, to affirm that gracious habits may be wrought in us by sinful acts; as soon may a man become just by cozenage, and merciful by oppression, sober by drunkenness, and liberal by griping; as any man can become holy by acts of his own will, since every act of his will is before conversion sinful and unholy. Besides, the will of man, by the Fall, is become a fleshly will; but, in Regeneration, it is made a spiritual will; now it is a most strange kind of production, that a fleshly will should beget a spiritual will; nor would that, which our Saviour affirms, any longer hold true, in John iii. 6; *That, which is born of the flesh, is flesh,* if a fleshly will could beget a spiritual will. You see, then, by this, that no man, by the power and freedom of his own will, can regenerate himself. As for previous dispositions and preparatory works, I deny not but that an unregenerate man may, by the common assistance of the Spirit, and by the industrious and careful improvement of his own power, proceed very far in them, so as

not to be far off from the kingdom of God; but, still, the great change of Regeneration itself is not wrought by our own power, or by our own will; so saith St. John, speaking of believers: and he affirms it, in as express terms as may be, in John i. 13; *Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God:* a plain and undeniable proof, that our will is not the efficient cause of our New-Birth.

2. In that it is called a being born again, it is implied, *that there must be a Father of this Divine and heavenly, as well as of the natural birth.*

Now God himself is this Father; and hence is it, that the saints are said to be born of God, and to be the children of God. This is their parentage, their high original and extraction; in which, though they are poor, despised, and distressed, they may more truly glory, than the great ones of the earth in the paint and empty glittering of a noble or honourable title.

But, concerning the duty and dignity of a child under this consideration of being born again, I may have occasion to speak when I come to the Application, and so I shall reserve it till then. I am yet on the doctrinal part.

God is now, under a different notion, a Father to his children, by regeneration, and adoption. By Adoption, we receive the privileges of children, and are numbered among the family of heaven; made heirs of glory, and co-heirs with Jesus Christ our elder brother. By Regeneration, we receive the divine nature, are made partakers of it; and, as natural children often bear such lively representations and resemblances of their parents, that we may know by their very countenances whose they are; so, in the New-Birth, there is such a resemblance of God stamped upon the soul, that, by the conformity of our wills and affections to his, it may well be discerned that he is our Father. In Regeneration, we receive his nature: in Adoption, we receive the privileges of his children: we are made sons by both.

It is true, God is the author of all other things, as well as of the grace of Regeneration. By him doth the whole frame of nature subsist, and all men owe their beings to his power and goodness: but, yet, the endearing and sweet name of Father he appropriates to himself, not because he gives natural beings to his creatures, although in that respect too he is *parens rerum*, "the parent of all things;" but because also he gives supernatural grace to his own children, which indeed is a giving them of his own nature. To give them natural beings, is but to communicate to them the effects

of his power and providence: but to give them supernatural grace, is to communicate to them of his own nature, and therefore more especially he is called their Father; the Father of those, that he doth regenerate. The rest of his works are but the effects of his common goodness and bounty; but this is the effect of his special grace: wherein God doth more show forth the effects of a Father, than in the production of all the world.

3. *The seminal virtue or means, by which this New-Birth is effected, is the Word of God.*

So you have it expressly, in James i. 18; *Of his own good will begat he us with the word of truth.* In Ezek. xxxvii. 4, you read that the Prophet is commanded to prophesy over a heap of dry bones: such an almighty power was in his words, that it is said, in verses 7, 8, as he *prophesied, there was a* great *noise, and.....shaking* among the bones.....and *sinews and flesh came up upon them.* An almighty power indeed, that could speak dry bones into living men! The same, that the Prophet did only in a vision, the word of God preached doth in a reality. We are all of us dry bones, till this almighty word breathe life and quickening into us. The preaching of the word is the great means, which God hath appointed for regeneration: Rom. x. 17; *Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* When God first created man, it is said, that he *breathed into his nostrils the breath of life:* but when God new-creates man, he breathes into his ears. This is that word, that raiseth the dead; calling them out of the grave: this is that word, that opens the eyes of the blind, that turns the hearts of the disobedient and rebellious. And, though wicked and profane men scoff at preaching, and count all ministers' words and God's word too but so much wind; yet they are such wind, believe it, as is able to tear rocks, and to rend mountains; such wind, as, if ever they are saved, must shake and overturn the foundations of all their carnal confidences and presumptions. Be exhorted, therefore, more to prize, and more to frequent the preaching of the word. How knowest thou, O sinner, but, whilst thou art slothfully absenting thyself from the public ordinances, that word is then spoken, that might have been thy conversion? How knowest thou, but that, whilst thou art sleeping in the congregation, that word is then spoken, that possibly, if thou hadst attended to it, might have awakened thee from the dead sleep of sin and security? Such an energy is there in the word of God, when the Spirit of God clothes it with power, that it breaks in upon the conscience; ruinates and demolishes the frame of sinful nature; and, in an instant, conveys spiritual light, warmth, and quickening into the soul.

4. *There are pangs and throes, that do accompany this New-Birth, as well as the natural birth.*

And these are convictions and humiliations: when the soul is bowed down under the insupportable burden of its own guilt, and the sense of God's wrath: when it lies groveling in prayer; rending itself, and heaven too, with its cries. In the midst of all these agonies, Christ Jesus becomes formed in the soul; and the work of grace is accomplished, which is the true ground of joy and comfort for ever after. Indeed these travailling pangs are not alike strong in all men. In some, they are distracting terrors; terrors that break their bones, and drink up their spirits: and such, usually, they are in old and customary sinners, that will not be won by more gentle and mild courses: with such knotty pieces as these are, the Spirit of God deals terribly; and, in their New-Births, cuts them out of the womb, and saves them after such a manner, that to their present apprehensions he could not deal more dreadfully with them if he had destroyed them. But those, that are converted in their youth, before customariness in sin and hardness of heart had made them impenetrable to the ordinary works of the Spirit of God, with these God deals more mildly; and melts them down, by soft and sweet relentings of soul; and delivers them into the glorious liberty of the children of God, without those violent pangs and convulsions, that others do undergo: yet in all that are sanctified and regenerated, after they arrive at the use of reason, it holds true in the New-Birth, as well as in the natural birth, that they do all of them bring forth in sorrow.

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II. Thus you see what this work of Regeneration is, without which, our Saviour tells us, that no man shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.

And, to show both the certainty and weight of this truth, he doth twice assert it: once in the third verse; and, then again, in the text.

This is that very first doctrine, in which our Saviour instructs his novice-disciple. Nicodemus, being convinced of Christ's extraordinary mission by the miracles that he wrought, courts him with terms full of humble respect; *Rabbi*, says he, *thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.* To this our Saviour answers, more pertinently to his salvation than to his charesis, *Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God:* as if he should say, "The miracles, that I do, prove my mission, that I am sent of God; but

I do greater miracles than any, which thou hast seen or heard of. Thou hast heard, perhaps, that I restore sight to those, that are blind; and life to those, that are dead: but I am come to give eyes to those, that do already see; and to give life to those, that do already live. I am come to cause those, that are already born, to be born again: and this is a miracle, that must be wrought upon thee, and upon all that shall be saved; to turn flesh into spirit, to fashion lumps of clay into the glorious similitude of the image of God. This is the greatest of all miracles, and this great miracle must be wrought upon all; for, except this be done," says our Saviour, "no man can enter into heaven."

The words contain in them, a general Proposition: A man cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. An exceptive Limitation, added to this general proposition: Except a man be born again.

And both these do deliver to us this proposition, or Doctrinal Observation.

That REGENERATION, OR THE NEW-BIRTH, IS OF ABSOLUTE NECESSITY UNTO ETERNAL LIFE.

There is no other change simply necessary, but only this. If thou art poor, thou mayest so continue, and yet be saved: if thou art despised, thou mayest so continue, and yet be saved: if thou art unlearned, thou mayest continue so, and yet be saved. Only one change is necessary: if thou art wicked and ungodly, and continuest so, Christ, who hath the keys of heaven, who shutteth and no man openeth, hath himself doomed thee, that thou shalt in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. This is also definitely pronounced by the Apostle, Heb. xii. 14; *Without* holiness *no man shall see the Lord.*

In the prosecuting of this doctrine, I shall first give you some Demonstrations of it, and then apply it.

Very difficult it is to persuade men against the prejudices of their corrupt hearts. "This great change," say they, "is more than needs." Regeneration begins now to be decried, by as great Masters in Israel, as ever Nicodemus was. Many understand not to what end the fabric of corrupt nature should be demolished; and men as it were, turned out of themselves. They think, if they are baptized, whereby, as they suppose, the guilt of original sin is washed away; and lead a sober religious life, keeping from gross actual sins; that this is sufficient for the obtaining of heaven, without those hard and inexplicable notions of Regeneration and the New-Birth.

I shall, therefore, endeavour to convince you of the indispensable

necessity that there is, of being *born again*; that so, when you are persuaded of it, you may give no rest to yourselves nor unto God, till he cause his Spirit, which is that *wind* that *bloweth where it listeth*, to breathe spiritual life into you, without which it is impossible that you should inherit eternal life.

i. There is AN IDENTITY OR SAMENESS BETWIXT GRACE AND GLORY: and therefore it is, that Regeneration is so necessary unto Salvation.

What is that illustrious thing, that we call the Glory of Heaven? Is it, that we shall outshine the brightness of the sun? or that we shall tread on a pavement of stars? Is it a freedom from diseases, pains, and death? Is it, that we shall hear the melody and songs of saints and angels? These things indeed, and whatever the heart of man can desire or imagine to be excellent, do fill up this blessed estate: but, yet, that, which chiefly constitutes heaven, is holiness; that very holiness, that wicked men, who yet presumptuously hope to inherit heaven, do yet despise and hate on earth. We shall there be united to God by love, depend on him by faith, obey him with delight: and that, with the very same love, faith, and delight, as we do here on earth; only these graces shall then be exalted above all imperfections and frailties. This is the Glory of Heaven. The glory of God himself consists, especially, in his infinite holiness; and, therefore, in that most triumphant song of Moses, in Exod. xv. 11. God is styled *glorious in holiness, fearful in praises:* now the glory of the saints in heaven is but a reflection cast upon them from the glory of God; and, therefore, as he is especially glorious in his holiness, so are they also glorious in their holiness. If, then, grace and glory be the very same thing, canst thou, O Sinner, ever hope for glory without grace? Or, is not this the heaven that thou dost desire and hope for? Is it a place of ease and pleasure only, that thou wishest; where thou mayest be free from cares and fears, from sorrows and sad hours? why this is impossible: such a heaven God never made, nor canst thou in reason expect; for God hath so linked sin and the curse together, that heaven itself would be no sanctuary to thee from the regrets and stingings of conscience, nor from the horror and ghastly fear of wrath, if sin and guilt should enter there with thee.

ii. UNREGENERATE MEN ARE UTTERLY UNSUITABLE TO THIS STATE OF GLORY; and, therefore, there must necessarily intervene this great change of Regeneration.

All true pleasure and delight springs from the suitableness of the object of the power or faculty that receives it. Thus Solomon

tells us, *It is a pleasant thing for the eye to behold the sun,* or the light: it is pleasant also for the ear to hear melody: because these objects are attempered and proportioned to the senses. Now as light brings no pleasure to a blind man, nor music to a deaf man: so there would be nothing pleasing in heaven to us: but that God doth, beforehand, by his grace temper and proportion our souls to that glory, that he will then reveal unto us. Hence it is, that the Apostle, in Col. i. 12, gives thanks unto God, that *hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.*

But wicked and unregenerate men are altogether unsuitable, both to the Work, and also to the Reward of Heaven.

1. *They are unsuitable to the Work of Heaven.*

And what is the Work of Heaven, but the adoring, admiring, blessing, praising, loving, and serving of God for ever and ever? This is that work, wherein saints and angels spend an eternity. And dost thou, O profane Wretch, think to crowd in among that blessed company, and join with them in this blessed work? What! must that heart of thine, which here on earth was used only as the Devil's pot to seethe and stew wicked thoughts in, be now on a sudden filled with the spiritual praises of the Great God? Is this, thinkest thou, fit or likely? Is it fit, that that tongue of thine, which hath even been blistered with horrid oaths, cursed revilings, and reproaches of God and godliness, should first in heaven begin to set forth the high praises of God? There are none admitted to be free citizens of the New Jerusalem, but only such as have first served out their time of holiness, some more, some fewer years, here on earth. The work of heaven must be learned in the time of our apprenticeship on earth. And tell me now, what delight do you take in holiness? Is it not a task and burden to you; I will not say always to keep alive in your thoughts, constant meditations of holy things, and vigorous affections towards them: but is it not a task and burden to you, to be sometimes drawn to the external performance of holy duties? Why else do you engage so seldom, and so slightly in them? What makes it thus your task, but an unholy and an unchanged heart? And what think you would it be, a heaven or a hell, a happiness or a torment, to you, to spend an eternity in the most fixed contemplations, and in a most ardent love of God? You, who cannot bear the imperfect holiness of God's children, but rail at it as unnecessary and a punish preciseness, how will you be able to bear the most consummate holiness of heaven? Now wicked men, though they vex at the purity of the saints and laugh at it at once, yet is it toilsome: though it is a devilish

contentment to them, that they can reproach their defects: should these men enter into heaven with unchanged hearts, heaven would be a place of exact torture to them; to find nothing there but that purity which they hate, and that perfect purity which hath no defects for them to abuse.

Behold, then, the certain and unavoidable misery of unregenerate men; that even heaven itself cannot make them happy, nor is it scarce in the power of the Almighty to bless them! Tell me, thou, that, in holy duties, grudgest at every word that is spoken, and at every sand that runs; that thinkest every summons to the public worship, as unpleasant as the sound of thy passing-bell; that sayest, "When will the Sabbath be gone, and the ordinances be over?" what wilt thou do in heaven? what shall such an unholy heart do there, where a Sabbath shall be as long as eternity itself; where there shall be nothing but holy duties; and where there shall not be a spare minute, so much as for a vain thought or an idle word? What wilt thou do in heaven, where, whatsoever thou shalt hear, see, or converse with is all holy? And, by how much more perfect the holiness of heaven is, than that of the saints on earth; by so much the more irksome and intolerable would it be to wicked men: for, if they cannot endure the weak light of a star, how will they be able to bear the dazzling light of the sun itself?

I speak all this to convince wicked men, how weak, vain, and foolish a thing it is, for them to hope for happiness without endeavouring after this great change. Misery pursues them, even to heaven itself; and they would not be happy, even there. Certain it is, that God never bestows heaven upon any, but beforehand he makes them agreeable to its holiness by their own. As for swines and dogs, filthy and impure sinners, God will never punish them with the purity of heaven: no; he hath provided another place for their torment; where they shall eternally and incessantly hate and blaspheme God, as the saints in glory love and praise God. It is therefore necessary, that, as musicians tune their instruments before they enter into the presence of any; so our hearts should be tuned to the songs and praises of heaven, before we enter into the glorious presence of God, to be made his music for ever.

2. *Unregenerate men are unsuitable to the Reward of Heaven.*

As the work there is spiritual work, so the Reward is a spiritual reward. And it consists, especially, in two things; both of them unsuitable to a carnal heart: in a clear vision of God; and an unimaginable entireness of communion with him in heaven. And these two things, of all others, unholy persons cannot bear.

(1) The Sight of God, to a sinner, is infinitely full of dread and terror.

You read in Scripture what dreadful apprehensions, even God's own children have had, after some, though but restrained and reserved, discoveries of himself to them; and that, because they had still some remainders of corruption in them, that grace in this life could not destroy. Thus, the prophet Isaiah cries out, *Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips*....and *mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts:* and, so, when Christ put forth his divine power in working of a miracle, the glory of it was so terrible and so unsupportable, even to holy Peter, that he cries out, Luke v. 8; *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.* And if these faint discoveries of God, even to holy men themselves, were so astonishing and unsupportable, what a confounding sight then will it be, to have all the glorious attributes of God break forth in a full flash upon the faces of wicked men; when, among the rest of those attributes, they shall behold the dread wrath and severe justice of God, to be sworn and armed against sin and sinners! Is this a sight, that will make heaven desirable to a wicked man? How dost thou think to endure the rays of that excellent glory and majesty, which make even the eyes of the angels themselves to twinkle with the dazzling brightness of it?

(2) As for that near Bosom-Communion with God, wherein stands another part of the reward of heaven; this is that, which wicked men hate: yea, they hate that any should pretend to it.

Those sweet, endearing intercourses, that pass betwixt God and the soul, in ways of worship, of love for love, and of obedience for mercies received, they never knew on earth, and how then shall they be fit for them in heaven? Certainly, to be for ever tied up to such spiritualities as these, will make heaven but an uncomfortable place to an ungodly, unchanged heart.

Now tell me, after this representation made unto you, both of the Work and of the Reward of Heaven, whether you are indeed willing to be in this eternal state or no. A strange question, you may think! What! to ask men whether they are willing to go to heaven, and to be possessed of glory! But, let me tell you, it is an impossible thing, for an unsanctified heart really to wish to be in heaven; considering it under that notion of perfect purity and true holiness, which hath now been laid before you. Do you wish to be for ever employed in the loving, praising, serving, and enjoying of God, without interruption or cessation? why then do you not endeavour to fit yourselves for it, against the time of your ap-

pearing in glory? why do you not labour after true grace, that alone can fit you for that holy and blessed work? That idea and notion, that wicked men frame to themselves of heaven, only as a place of ease, rest, and all blessedness, makes them to believe that they do really wish themselves possessed of it; but, yet, if it could be supposed that such a person were taken up into heaven, he would find it a place so contrary to his fancy and corrupt inclinations, that he would soon wish rather to be on earth again in the pursuit of his more sensible and suitable pleasures.

I have the longer insisted on this particular demonstration, because I look upon this as a most convincing argument, to make every wicked man see how unfit he is, in a state of unregeneracy for the state of glory. As ever, therefore, you hope for heaven, and I dare assure myself that this is the hope of all of you, make sure to yourselves this great change. It is no notion, that I have now preached unto you: your natures and your lives must be changed; or, believe it, you will be found at the Last Day under the wrath of God. For God will not change or alter the word, that is gone out of his mouth: he hath said it, Christ who is the truth and word of God hath pronounced it, that, without this New-Birth or Regeneration, no man shall inherit the kingdom of God.

iii. WHATSOEVER A MAN DOTH IN A STATE OF UNREGENERACY IS SIN; and, therefore, the change of Regeneration is absolutely necessary, unto eternal life.

Whatever such a man's whole life is, it is nothing else but a continued course of sin, without either interruption or cessation: and, in this one particular lies a main difference betwixt a regenerate and unregenerate man. The regenerate man, through that corruption that is remaining in him, sins in every thing that he doth; but, whatever an unregenerate man doth is sin: there is the difference; the one doth, as it were, tread awry, in a right path; and the other runs out into a crooked and perverse one. And how then is it possible for such men ever to arrive at heaven, since every step they take leads down to the chambers of death and destruction?

I spake somewhat to this before, in opening to you the misery of an unregenerate state and condition; and showed you then, that the Scripture every where speaks of the civil actions and the religious duties of wicked men as sins: their ploughing is sin; and so also is their praying: yea, whatever they do is sin; they sin in doing evil, and they sin in doing good.

But I shall pass by that, and briefly enquire what it is, that makes all the actions and all the duties, that wicked men perform,

to be thus sinful. And this may be reduced to two particulars: and these are the Principle from which, and the End to which, their actions are done.

1. *The Principle from whence all the actions of an unregenerate man flow is corrupt;* and when the fountain is corrupt, the streams also, that issue from thence, must needs be tainted.

That principle, that is necessarily required to make our actions to be truly good and holy, is the sincere and superlative love of God. What we do becomes then a good action, when we do it from the commanding motive of Divine Love: and, therefore, our Saviour saith, in John xiv. 24; *He, that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings.* Our whole duty consisteth, either in that which immediately respects God, or in that which immediately respects man; and, accordingly, God hath comprised the whole Law in Two Tables: in the one, he prescribes the services due to himself; and, in the other, he requires from us what is due to men: and both these are fulfilled by love. So, saith the Apostle, Rom. xiii. 10, *Love is the fulfilling of the Law:* and therefore, our Saviour reduceth all the Ten Commandments unto Two, in Matt. xxii. 37, 38, 39. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy* might. *This is the first....Commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* Our Saviour reduceth all unto two, and these two speak but one and the same thing, Love, which is the fulfilling of the commandment. Now this teacheth us, that, whatever external conformity our actions may carry in them to the letter of the Law, yet are they not true obedience to God's Commandments, if they flow not from a principle of love. Though you may perform each particular duty required in each particular command, yet this is not fulfilling but transgressing the Law, if what you do is not done out of a principle of divine love. This is that universal qualification, that can alone make our duties truly good and acceptable unto God. So that, either to do contrary to the Law, or to do actions that the Law requires without love to God, are both of them sins; the one against the express letter, and the other against the true sense, of the Law. Now no unregenerate man can act any thing from this divine principle of the love of God; for this is implanted in us, only by Regeneration: and, therefore it is said, 1 John iv. 7; *Every one, that loveth, is born of God.* The great moving principle in a carnal man, that sets him on to work every thing that he doth, is love indeed, but it is only self-love; not love to God, but love to self: a love, that is enmity and hatred against God; and, therefore, whatever he doth is sin.

2. As all unregenerate men fail in the Principle, so they also fail *in the End of all their actions.*

For, such as a man's principle is, such also will be the end that he propounds. Water will naturally rise no higher than the spring-head from whence it flows: so neither can any man's principles carry him out to act above themselves. Now as the love of God is the moving principle to a regenerate man, so the glory of God is his determining end: and so, on the contrary, self-love being the only principle of an unregenerate man's actions, self-preservation must be his utmost end into which he resolves all. And, because God hath in his word of truth threatened destruction to those who persevere in sin, and promised an unconceivable reward of glory to obedience, self-love here interposes; and excites to the external duties of religion, that thereby it may escape the one and obtain the other. Now, herein, self-love is very blind: for, by propounding himself as his end, he loseth the reward sought for, and all his services become only sins.

I would not be thought to condemn this kind of self-seeking in religion, for I know that it is one of the greatest incentives to obedience. Moses *had respect unto the recompense of the reward,* and encouraged himself by it: yea, of Christ, a greater than Moses, the Apostle saith; he had an eye upon the glory set before him, to encourage him to undergo those humiliations and abasements that he was sent into the world for. Only when a man's self-concernments stand so full in his eye, that he cannot look either beside them or above them, then do such self-ends become sinful in themselves, and turn also every action that is directed by them into sin.

Here, then, let every carnal, unchanged sinner see the sad and deplorable condition he is in: what little ground he hath to hope for heaven and salvation. Alas! Sinners, how do you hope to be saved? The only way, that leads to heaven and happiness, is faith and good works: not such equivocal good works, as most men rely upon; but such genuine ones, as have the love of God for their principle, and glory of God for their end: and such no unregenerate man can produce. All the rest are but trash and lumber; and such, as will rather burden, than crown your souls, at the Last Day. Think of it seriously: unless the foundation be laid in a real change of grace wrought upon your souls, all that afterwards you build is but hay and stubble; such, as will only add fuel to your unquenchable fire. Think not, therefore, as many ignorant, sottish people do, of balancing your evil deeds by your good: for, if you are in an unregenerate, in a natural state and condition, if in the same

that you brought into the world, there is nothing but what is evil and sinful. And it is very sad to consider, that, when God and your own consciences shall come, at the Last Day, to take a review of your lives; those lives, that have been full of actions, perhaps for forty, fifty, or threescore years together; that then they shall be found to be but one continued series of wickedness, one sin succeeding another without the least gap made in it by one good and holy work. This is the condition of every unregenerate sinner. And, therefore, if ever you hope for heaven, endeavour for Regeneration: for this change is absolutely necessary, for the raising of your actions from being sinful to be holy.

iv. HEAVEN, IN SCRIPTURE, IS PROMISED TO BE GIVEN BY WAY OF INHERITANCE, AND NO OTHERWISE.

So you have it, in Acts xx. 32, and, in Acts xxvi. 18, and in many other places. Now an inheritance denotes sonship: God will not give that inheritance unto any, but to those, that are his own children. We are all of us naturally strangers to God: and, before we can become his children, we must be New-Born; and, by this New-Birth it is, that we are made heirs of glory, and coheirs with Jesus Christ our elder brother: and, therefore, Regeneration is absolutely necessary unto eternal salvation.

v. IT IS NOT FOR THE HONOUR OF GOD, TO BESTOW HEAVEN AND HAPPINESS UPON SINFUL MEN, UNLESS THEY ARE CHANGED.

The glory of God is chiefly manifested in our Regeneration. Should he admit sinners into heaven, many of his attributes would suffer thereby. His Truth would suffer, in saving those, whom in his word he had doomed to damnation. His Justice would suffer; for, if he should save all wicked men, and leave none as vessels of wrath, what would become of the glory of his justice and severity? if he should save some, and not all, this would be partiality; seeing all, according to the terms of the Gospel, are equally liable to damnation. His Holiness would suffer also, in the admitting of unholy and impure men to inhabit for ever before him, who is of purer eyes than to behold sin on earth with approbation, and therefore certainly will not behold sin in heaven with countenance.

vi. BOTH THE PERSONS AND THE PERFORMANCES OF UNREGENERATE MEN, WHILE THEY ARE SUCH, ARE DISPLEASING UNTO GOD; and, therefore, this change is necessary in order unto salvation.

Certainly, if God neither loves what they are nor what they do, it will be impossible for them to enter into heaven, while God keeps it garrisoned against them; unless they can break down the eternal fence, and take it by another force than ever John Baptist's hearers did.

Now that God neither loves unregenerate men's Persons nor Performances, neither what they are nor what they do, is clear.

1. *He loves not what they are: their Persons are displeasing to him.* Neither is this displeasure founded upon a small dislike, but upon that most bitter and implacable passion of hatred: Psal. v. 5: *Thou hatest all workers of iniquity.* And this hatred is reciprocal: for, as wicked men are hated by God, so they are haters of God: Rom. i. 30; *Haters of God:* Hence the Apostle tells us expressly, *they, that are in the flesh,* that is. in their unregenerate state, *cannot please God:* Rom. viii. 8; and he gives the reason of it, in verse 7; *Because,* says he, *the carnal mind is enmity against God:* thus you see the opposition is mutual: and amounts to no less than a hatred on both parts, both on God's and on the sinner's. Now, though anger be for the present a sharp and eager passion, yet is it soon pacified by a retribution of wrong for wrong; but hatred is irreconcilable, and rests satisfied in nothing less than in the utter destruction of its object: and thus wicked men hate God, and wish at least there were none, and do what they can to dethrone him; and God again so hates them, that he resolves he will have no peace with them, *There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked,* but will pursue them to destruction. Let sinners then seriously consider, that they are mortally hated by that God, who is of infinite power; and can, when he pleaseth, bring upon them the dreadful effects of his hatred. And is it like that such men shall ever enter into heaven, where there is such a hatred armed with power to their just and eternal perdition? Are you stronger than God? or are you more mighty than the Almighty? Can you reverse his decree, whereby he hath doomed all the wicked unto hell? or can you compel him to make other terms with you, than he hath already propounded in his unalterable word? Can you distress him to surrender heaven to you? or can you break down the walls and ramparts of heaven; and burst open those everlasting gates, that he hath shut and sealed against you? Alas! then, what are all your hopes? Whereto is it, that you trust? Do you think, at last, to enter heaven as friends, who now daily assault the God of Heaven as enemies? Assure yourselves, so long as God is able to hold it out against you, not one wicked wretch shall ever enter there. When the angels rebelled, God chased whole millions of them out of heaven; and do you think that ever he will admit rebellious men into heaven? No: doubtless the same hatred, that cast them out headlong, and pursues them down to the pit of hell, will also pursue all the wicked of the world thither, who are as

well enemies to God as the Devils themselves. Let all unrenewed sinners, therefore, sadly snd seriously consider with themselves what hopes they have of heaven, since God counts them for enemies; and professes that he hates them, nay, not only hates them, but hates the very place where they are for their sakes: so you have it, in Amos vi. 8; *The Lord hath sworn by himself.....I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and I hate his palaces.* And should wicked men come into heaven, heaven would become a hateful seat unto God.

2. As their Persons are hateful, so also *all their Performances are displeasing unto God.*

This follows upon the former: for where the person is not accepted, the services cannot be. And therefore it is said, Gen. iv. 4. *The Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering;* first, to his person; and, then, to his service. If your persons be hateful to God, never expect that your performances should be acceptable. And the reason is clear, because there is but one way of acceptance for ourselves and for our duties, and that is through Christ. As the best are not, in this life, free from the remainders of sin; so neither are their best duties free from the mixtures of sin: now these sinful mixtures are so manifest unto God, that he must needs reject and abominate them, were it not that Christ, into whose hands they are first delivered, separates those mixtures, and fills up all their defects by the redundancy of his own merits: but the duties of wicked men are not accepted in Christ: so audacious and bold are they, as to come before God without a mediator to present them; and that God, who is pleased with nothing but what is absolutely perfect, if not so in itself, yet at least in the mediation of his Son, seeing so many faults and flaws in the services of wicked men, cannot but cast them back as dung and filth in their faces; for God, accepting of nothing but what is perfect, and the services of wicked men wanting the merits of Jesus Christ, they come up before God as unsavory stenches instead of sweet smells. This is the fruitless issue of wicked men's duties: and, therefore, the Apostle tells us, in Heb. xi. 6, that *without faith, it is impossible to please God;* because faith is that grace, that unites and makes us one with Christ, and gives us an interest in those merits that alone can procure acceptance for ourselves and for our services: but wicked and unregenerate men have not this faith; and, therefore, nothing that they do is well-pleasing unto God: they may, for the good works that they do, be rewarded possibly with temporal blessings, and certainly with the mitigation of future punishments: but the reward of

of eternal life belongs to none, but to those, whose services are accepted through him to whom their persons are united.

See here, then, the miserable shipwreck of all the hopes of carnal men: who regard not what they are, but look only, and that too with a too favourable eye, upon what they do; and, with the boasting Pharisee, make large inventories of their good works. They fast twice a week, and give alms often: they are frequent in prayer, and constant at the ordinances: and therefore they think, certainly, that they shall enter into heaven with the forwardest. But, alas! what is all this? God respects what thou art, as well as what thou dost: and if all your duties proceed from an unchanged, unrenewed heart, he neither accepts them, nor regards them. Thou, perhaps, thinkest that thou hast laid up a great mass of treasure for thy soul, against the time to come; whereas, at the Last Day, it will be found to be but great heaps of dung and filth. Nay, let me tell you, should you pray till your knees took root in the earth, could you nail your eyes to heaven, could you melt your hearts into tears, and vanish away into sight, yea and spend every moment of your lives far better than ever you spent the best, and yet should you remain unsanctified and unchanged, all this would be of no account with God; but, instead of an *Euge, Well done, good and faithful servant,* you would meet with that unexpected demand, *Who hath required* these things *at your hands?* Consider seriously and sadly of this, you, who think that you have many duties upon the file in heaven, as so many evidences of your right and title unto heaven. As you would not have all these to be lost, and utterly in vain; so look to it, that they proceed from hearts, that are truly sanctified and renewed: without which, they will be of no avail at all in God's esteem.

And, so much, for the Demonstrations of this point.

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III. I come now to take some USE and APPLICATION of what hath been spoken concerning this great and necessary doctrine of Regeneration.

It is not a particular doctrine, that concerns some persons, and not others: upon this lies the eternal salvation of the whole world.

i. And, therefore, in the first place, seeing it is impossible ever to obtain life eternal without Regeneration or the New-Birth, let us then by this TRY OUR TITLE TO HEAVEN.

Put it seriously to the question: Are we indeed born again? Are we become the children of God: such as have a right and title to the purchased inheritance? The question is of vast concernment: and a mistake in this, either hazards our souls, by presumptuous

conceits that we are the children of God, when yet we are strangers and enemies to him; or destroys our comfort, by sinister apprehensions that we are aliens and outcasts, when yet we are begotten again by his Spirit, at least to the grounds of a lively hope.

I shall endeavour to manage this Use of Trial,

By laying down some particular Attainments of Carnal Men, that possibly they may mistake for evidences of their Regeneration.

By laying down some particulars, that the Scripture hath made infallible Marks and Tests of a Regenerate Person.

1. As to the *first* of these, the usual mistakes of those, whose convictions ever awaken them to a self-examination, are in that they rely upon works preparatory to Regeneration, for the work of Regeneration itself: for as, in natural generation, there is some previous disposition of matter, before there is the existence of a form; so, in Regeneration, commonly, though not always, there are some preparations of the soul by the common works of the Spirit, before the New Creature is formed in it.

Now, by Regeneration, there is a Fivefold change wrought.

Upon the Understanding or Judgment, by enlightening it.

Upon the Conscience, by awakening and pacifying it.

Upon the Affections, by spiritualizing them.

Upon the Will, by converting it.

Upon the Life and Conversation, by reforming it.

From each of these particulars, carnal men may collect mistaken evidences for their Regeneration: and these I shall endeavour to discover to you.

(1) Touching the Mind or Understanding: that may be greatly irradiated with a clear and sparkling knowledge of spiritual objects, when yet the soul is not truly regenerated.

It is true, as, in the creation of the world, light was numbered amongst the first of God's works; so, in this new creation, the first work of the Spirit of God is to shed abroad a heavenly light into the understanding; and, therefore, we have this first in order, in the commission, that Christ gives unto St. Paul, Acts xxvi. 17, 18; *I send thee* to the Gentiles, *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light; and,* then it follows, *from the power of Satan unto God.* But, yet, notwithstanding there is an illumination about spiritual things that may gild and beautify the understandings of unregenerate men; who, like the toad, may be full of poison, though she hath a precious stone in her head. The Apostle lays down this as one of the first attainments that unregenerate men may have, and yet be apostates: Heb. vi. 4, 6; *For it is impossible for those, who*

*were once enlightened....If they shall fall away, to renew them again* by *repentance.* They may not only have a deep knowledge of gospel mysteries, so as to see the whole compages and concatenation of the doctrine of Christ, and be able to unfold them also unto others; but also have particular discoveries of the glory and beauty that is in those things. See it in Balaam's extasy, Numb. xxiv. 5; *How* amiable *are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!* where, besides that prophetical illumination which was darted into him immediately by the Spirit of God, he had also a glorious discovery made to him of the beauty and excellency of the spiritual state of the Church: it was not only a view of the order and discipline of the Israelitish camp, that made him break forth into high admirations; but also a seeing of them ranged under Jesus Christ the Captain of their Salvation, which was an extraordinary illumination to such an unregenerate wretched man as Balaam was. Such discoveries of the most spiritual objects, carnal hearts may have made unto them: they may see their lost estate by nature, the way of recovery by grace, the suitableness of Christ to their souls, the riches of his grace, the freeness of his love, the readiness of his heart to save them, the desirableness of happiness, and the beauties of holiness; and yet, for all this, remain still in a carnal and unregenerate state.

Now such an illumination of carnal men falls short of being a good evidence of Regeneration in two particulars.

[1] Because it is a barren light.

That illumination, that is saving, is not only light, but influence also. As the light of the sun doth not only serve to paint the world, and varnish over the variety and beauty of the several creatures that are in it; but, by the grateful heat that its influence insinuates and soaks into them, doth also refresh them; and, as its light discovers their beauties, as its influence increaseth them: so, saving illumination not only illustrates the soul by its light; but, by its congealing influences, nourisheth it, draws sap into it and fruit from it. But the illumination of wicked men is but a barren light; and hath no influences in it, to make the soul to grow and bring forth the fruits of holiness.

[2] It is an ineffectual, idle light.

The illumination, that is saving, is also transforming: 2 Cor. iii. 18; *We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory.* If a beam of the sun fall upon a looking glass, it not only makes the glass to have a greater and a more glorious light, but it represents the im-

age of the sun in it; but let it beat never so clearly against a mud-wall, though it doth enlighten it, yet it leaves no image upon it: so, truly, the illumination, that is saving, not only irradiates, but transforms. If you look upon the sun when it is in its full strength, the light thereof will imprint the shape and image on the eye: so that, look where you will, still the appearance of the sun is visibly before you: so, every sight, that a true Christian hath of the Sun of Righteousness, makes a parallel, another sun in his soul. But the illumination of wicked men only enlightens, but doth not change them: their understandings may be irradiated with glorious discoveries of God, and Christ, and the things of another world; but this doth not transform them into the image and likeness of these things. The illumination of a regenerate person is like light, that breaks through the air in an instant, and turns all the vast body throughout into light: but, in a carnal heart, it is but like light falling upon jet or ebony, that makes it shining, but changeth not its hue and blackness. Yea, it is with them, as it is with men that lie long tanning in the sun; who, though they are enlightened by the sun, yet they are also made black and swarthy by it: so, though men may have the light of the knowledge of Jesus Christ shining strongly upon them, yet that very light tans their souls, makes them more black and deformed, and aggravates their sins. So, then, thou mayest have as much notional knowledge of God and of the mysteries of the Gospel, as any regenerate person whatever; yea, and much more: and yet, for all this, have no good evidence of thy Regeneration; for this knowledge is not therefore saving because it is clear, but because it is influential and transforming.

And that is the First thing, which many mistake for Regeneration; because they are enlightened.

(2) As to the Conscience, neither the peace nor yet the trouble of conscience, are good evidences of a man's Regeneration.

[1] Not the Peace of Conscience.

For though, where this peace is true, it is always an effect of grace; and therefore we have them so often coupled together, as Rom. i. 7, and 1 Cor. i. 3; *Grace be unto you, and peace, from God the Father:* yet there is that, which looks very like peace of conscience, though it is not so in reality; and that is a supine presumption, a carnal stupidity and ossitancy of conscience, in men, that never have been troubled with the sight of sin or the sense of wrath, nor ever had any serious thoughts of their vileness by it: but it is with them, as it was with those presumptuous sinners in Deut. xxix. 19, who *bless* themselves in their hearts, *saying*, they *shall*

*have peace, though* they *walk* on *in the imagination of* their hearts, adding *drunkenness to thirst.* Now this peace is founded only upon a bold and confident persuasion, without any examination of their interest in God, and of his love and favour to them: "God is infinitely merciful and gracious, and he will exalt his mercy above all his name; and, therefore, as he hath exalted his power in creating and sustaining us, will he not also much more exalt his mercy in saving us?" Thus, as madmen often fancy themselves to be kings or some great persons, when indeed they are wretched and miserable spectacles; so do these spiritually madmen: they not only, with the Devil, look upon the glory of this world, and say, "All is mine;" but they look upon the glory of heaven itself, and say presumptuously, all this is theirs. This is a spiritual frenzy, that makes them speak of great matters, in which they have no interest at all. Yea, this presumption is often accompanied with a fiducial, or rather a confidential application to themselves, in particular, of the love of God, and of the merit of Jesus Christ, so as to appropriate them unto themselves as their own: now this is the highest act of faith, when it flowers up unto assurance, to say with St. Thomas, *My Lord and my God;* yet, through a mere wretchless security, sinners take it for granted that God is theirs, though they never examined their evidences, and scarce know upon what terms God hath promised to become ours. To such I may say, as our Saviour doth, God *is not the God of the dead, but of the living:* he is not the Father of such, as live in and love their wickedness: it were a dishonour to him, to be a Father to such children. As we must not discourage the broken and contrite spirit, but embolden him to appropriate Christ to himself in particular: so we must let wicked men know withal, that they call God their God and Father in presumption, and in the security of their hearts only; and their disappointment will be sad, when, instead of finding him their God and Father, they shall only find him their Judge. Now it appears that this peace of carnal man's conscience is only from a deep spiritual security: because, if you come to examine the grounds of it, what is it that such plead, except the goodness of their hearts? they bless God that their hearts are good; and in this they trust, and of this they boast and glory: though they live in the constant neglect of holy duties, and though they wallow in the filth of customary sins, yet still they boast of this, that they have good hearts: but this is a mere self-delusion; for it is as utterly impossible, that the heart should be good where the life is wicked and profane, as that a good root should bring forth evil fruit. Such a secure peace is no good

evidence, that this great change is wrought upon the heart by Regeneration; but is only founded upon mere obstinacy and carelessness of the great concernments of men's everlasting salvation.

[2] As peace of conscience is not, so neither is Trouble of Conscience a good evidence of a man's Regeneration

A dull lethargic conscience, thath hath lain long insensible under the commission of gross sins, may at length by strong convictions be startled, awakened, and troubled with the sense of sin, and frighted with the sight of wrath; and yet, all this while, remain an impure and and polluted conscience. God may set an unregenerate man upon the rack, break all his bones, and give him some foretastes of that cup of trembling that he must for ever drink of; and, as he made himself a devil incarnate by his sins, so God may make his conscience a hell incarnate with his torments: you hear Cain, that primitive reprobate, crying out, *My punishment is greater than I can bear:* nor could Judas find any other way to choke his conscience, than with a halter. Though, in a course of sinning, conscience may be dead and seared; yet God will awaken this sleepy conscience: and, when it shall then see that it hath slept only on the top of a mast and on the brink of hell, and that it is falling into it irrevocably, what fears and terrors will this cramp it with! and yet this may leave it short of true grace; under the horrors of sin, and yet short of grace; torment it here, and yet possibly leave it to be for ever tormented hereafter. Take heed, therefore, of collecting evidences of Regeneration, only from the trouble of your consciences, which deceives many who take up with preparatory convictions, which do often vanish away without leaving any saving effects of true grace. Many, if their consciences are awakened to admonish, reprove, and threaten them, think this a good argument of the goodness of their condition: St. Paul saith of himself, in his unregenerate state, *touching the righteousness, which is* of *the law,* he was *blameless;* so strict and rigid an observer was he of the Law, that his conscience had little to accuse him of. And will you build your hopes upon a worse foundation, than he did in his unregeneracy? not that conscience hath nothing to accuse you of, but that it doth accuse you? not that you are not guilty, but that you are sensible of your guilt? what is this more than sinners shall find in hell? it is a great and insufferable part of those torments, to be pursued with the stinging regret of an enraged conscience, which is that worm that never dies: and will you take that for an evidence of grace, that must be for ever the punishment of sin? And, yet, do not many of us rest only on this, that conscience is awakened, frighting us in sin

and deterring us from sin? "Those sins, that, before, we could swallow down without straining at and digest without nauseating, now conscience riseth at, and we dare not commit them for a world; and those duties, that, formerly, we lived in the neglect of, conscience now straightly enjoins, and we dare not for a world neglect them: those sins, that, heretofore, we committed quietly, conscience now returns upon us with torment. And is not this a work of grace? Is not this Regeneration?" No: it is not, if there be no more: all this only proves conscience to be awakened, but not to be sanctified. Conscience may be defiled, though it be not seared: a filthy puddle may be stirred and troubled, as well as a clear stream; and conscience may work horrors and terrors in that soul, where the Spirit of God never yet wrought grace.

So that you see we cannot argue from the Peace of Conscience, nor yet from the Trouble of Conscience, that we are in a state of Regeneration; which is of absolute necessity to obtain heaven.

(3) As to the Affections, those sweet motions of the heart, though they are usually much relied on, yet even these affections unto holy and heavenly objects are not always infallible evidences of a man's Regeneration.

In Matt. xiii. 20, some are said to receive the word with joy; and yet they were unregenerate is clear, for it is said they had no root: and so, John v. 35, Christ tells the Jews, that they did rejoice for a season in the light of John Baptist, that is, in his doctrine and preaching: and Herod also is said to hear him gladly. So that you see these affections, of delight in holy duties and ordinances, may be in those, that are yet without a saving work of grace. And as there may be these affections of joy and delight, so also of sorrow for sin: thus, Matt. xxvii. 3, it is said expressly of Judas, that he *repented himself;* and Ahab's humiliation was so great, that God took special notice of it, 1 Kings xxi. 29.

Now all these affections are but temporary and vanishing: and they may be excited from several advantages, that holy things have in them to commend them to the hearts of carnal and unregenerate men.

[1] Sometimes, the very novelty and strangeness of them may affect us.

Novelty usually breeds delight, which longer custom and acquaintance somewhat abate. And this may be given as a true reason, why, soon after conversion, a new convert's affections are more strongly drawn out in the ways of God, than, afterwards, when he is a grown and settled Christian: his affections then, may not have

such full spring-tide, as when he was but a novice in Christianity: the reason is, because novelty, in that way and course that he is entered upon, doth naturally affect him, besides the real desirableness of the things themselves. And this also may satisfy us, though many have turned aside from the truth as it is in Jesus and from the ways of his worship that he hath appointed, and do yet boast that they have in those new ways found more new comfort and sweet affections than they did before, that yet this is not because those ways have any thing in them that really yields more comfort and delight, but only because they are new ways, and new things will for the present affect: after some continuance in those ways, they find that joy and delight, that they spake of, to flag; and then they seek out other new ways and commend them as much, having as great delight in them: and it is no wonder; for new ways will stir up new affections. And thus may the affections of carnal unregenerate men be stirred up, by their entering upon the profession and external practice of religion, because of the novelty of it to them.

[2] Good affections may be stirred in us, from the affecting nature of spiritual objects; for spiritual objects may affect us in a natural way.

Who can read the history of Christ's passion, without being affected with sorrow for all that sorrow that he underwent for us? He hath a heart certainly harder than a rock, that can think of the agonies, reproaches, cruel scourgings, and cursed death, that so innocent and so excellent a person as Christ was underwent, and that for sinners also, and not be moved and affected with grief and compassion to him. And yet it is possible, that these affections may be deceivable; and move no other ways, than they would do in the reading of some tragical story in a romance. To read some sad and dismal story, will naturally affect the heart with grief and sorrow. And so it may be with the truths revealed in the Gospel: upon thy reading of them, they may affect thee, according as those truths are: if they promise blessings, they may affect thee with joy: if they threaten, and thou readest sad and dismal events, they may affect thee with sorrow: and, yet, all this may be only from the nature of the objects, and not from any divine affections that are in thy soul.

[3] The affections may be stirred from or by the artificial rhetoric of others; by the abilities of the ministers, whom you hear.

And thus God tells the Prophet, Ezek. xxxiii. 32; *Thou art unto them as a very lovely song,* as *one that hath a pleasant voice, and*

canst *play well on an instrument.* They may have their judgments pleased with the learning showed in a sermon, and with the well methodizing of it; and their affections may be pleased with the oratory, and powerful utterance of it. Now, though these are good helps to spiritual affections, yet are they not good trials of them.

[4] Pride and self-seeking may, in the performance of duties excite good affections.

And men may be much deceived in this particular. As, in prayer, they may think they are affected with the things that they pray for: when as, possibly, their affections are moved only with the manner of their prayer; with their words; with that copious, free, and admirable gift, which they have, of expression: whereas a contrite heart, that is moved with true spiritual affections, may not be so adorned with such an admirable gift of expression. As the ground, that is fullest of precious mines, hath least grass growing upon it; so is it, many times, with the children of God in holy duties: where the heart is most full of grace, and where there are many precious affections stirring in it towards God, yet there are the least flourishings of expressions in their words. So that you see you cannot gather the truth of regenerating grace from the strong workings of your affections, which are very deceitful, even about spiritual things.

(4) Every change wrought upon the Will is not an infallible evidence of Regeneration.

It is, indeed, the thorough change of the will, in which this great work principally doth consist. This is the first principle of spiritual life; without which whatsoever other change is wrought upon us, is no more than to set the hand of the watch right to the hour when the spring is broken. The will is, by the philosopher, called the commanding and swaying faculty of the soul; which controls the affections and inferior faculties, and makes them obey its inclination: so that, such as the will is, such is the man. And, therefore, the Scripture, in setting forth the twofold estate of men, of nature and of grace, doth it by showing the temper of their wills; what their wills are. Unregenerate men are described by their wilfulness: John v. 40; *Ye will not come to me,* says our Saviour, *that ye might have life.* And the regenerate men are described by their willingness: Ps. cx. 3; *Thy people shall be* a *willing* people *in the day of thy power.*

Here I shall endeavour Two things. To show you after what manner the Spirit of God works this renewing change upon the will. To show you what other changes may be wrought upon it, that are good evidences of man's renovation.

[1] For the first, After what manner the Spirit of God works this renewing change on the will, you must know that there are two ways, whereby God doth effectually change the heart of a sinner: and they are moral persuasions; and physical determinations, or real efficiency, which is nothing else but God's all-powerful grace, whereby he doth immediately turn the bent and inclination of the will towards himself.

And both these always concur, in this great change of the will. God doth convincingly persuade us of our own vileness, and of the emptiness of all those vain things that our desires are so eagerly pursuing: and, on the other hand, he clearly represents to us the great excellency of himself and of his ways; that he is the greatest good we can enjoy; and that there is no other way of enjoying, but by loving and serving him. To do this, he makes use of moral persuasions; working upon our reason by cogent and prevailing arguments: and then diffuseth such a heavenly sweetness through the heart, as makes it disrelish all those fulsome delights of sin, that would separate us from that Infinite Good, with which they can hold no comparison: so that, finding more true delight in God and his ways, more charming and alluring joy than ever before we did in sensual pleasures, we are thereby carried forth to them by an infallible, yet altogether a free, voluntary, and amorous motion. And this is done by the real and immediate efficiency of the Spirit of God upon the will itself: and this operation of the Spirit of God upon the will is so sweetly attempered to the native liberty of the will, that it would be a pain and torment to the soul to be separated from that God, whom now its understanding apprehends, and its will clasps about as its chief and only good.

Here, you see, are both a moral suasion and a real determination of the will, in the work of Regeneration. God really determines it, by the efficacious touch of his own grace; whereby he powerfully turns the bent and inclination of it to himself, which before stood to sin and vanity. And, that this might be no infringement upon the will's prerogative in acting freely, at the same time he morally persuades it; representing himself as the best and most satisfying object for all its inclinations to centre in.

And, thus, the efficacy of divine grace and the liberty of man's will do fully accord, in this work of Regeneration, which some have thought to stand at an irreconcilable distance one from another. For the freedom of the will doth not consist in its indifferency to act or not to act; either to love and fear God, or not to love and fear him: for, otherwise, the saints and angels in heaven, who are

under that blessed necessity that they cannot but love God, should not then love him freely. But the liberty of the will consists in the will's acting upon rational grounds; which, by how much the more strong the grounds and reasons are that the will acts by, so much the more do they in a sort necessitate the will to act, and yet by so much the more free is the will in its actings; so that here, that the liberty of the will may not violate the certainty of God's purpose and decree, he changeth it by the power of his irresistible grace; and, yet, that this irresistible grace may not violate the liberty of the will, he persuades it by such powerful and rational arguments that it should not act freely if it should dissent from it.

Though God useth an infinite power in regenerating and converting a soul, yet he useth no violence: he subdues the will, but he doth not compel it. This is that victorious grace, that doth not more overcome a sinner's resistances, than it doth his prejudices: it overcomes all oppositions, by its own irresistible power; and it overcomes all prejudices, by its attracting sweetness: and, when it brings a sinner to submit to God, it makes him apprehend also that it is his chiefest happiness and joy so to do. This is the sweet nature of regenerating grace.

And it is the same winning sweetness, that afterwards preserves the regenerate from a total apostasy from grace: for, though there is a constant supply of grace, to keep them that they shall never certainly draw back to perdition; yet, withal, their own freedom is such, that they may if they will: but how can they will it, since the will never inclines but to that, which most pleaseth it; and nothing pleaseth a regenerate and sanctified will, so much as that sovereign good, that comprehends in it all other good, and that is God himself?

And thus you see how God disposeth of the will of man, in changing it to himself, without constraining it; turning it, as unforcibly, so infallibly to himself; when he draws it by the sweetness of his own efficacious inspirations..

And thus I have dispatched the first particular, in showing you after what manner the Spirit of God works this change on the will, by persuading it with rational arguments, that it cannot gainsay; and by overcoming it by his irresistible grace, that it cannot oppose.

[2] The second particular is to show you, What other changes may be wrought upon the will, that are no good evidences of a man's renovation and regeneration. And

1st. An unregenerate man may have many faint velleities and wishes after grace.

When he hears so much spoken of the beauty and excellency of holiness, he is convinced, in his judgment, that these things are true: that without holiness no man shall see the Lord: that though now, whilst he is carnal, spiritual duties are tedious and burdensome to him; yet, were he himself but spiritual, they would be pleasing and delightful to him: that those very pleasures of sin which now keep him off from closing with grace, were he but renewed would all be but an unsavoury thing to him: and, that what he is afraid to lose should he turn to Christ, he would not value the loss of were he but in Christ. When an unregenerate man is fully convinced of this, it makes him break out into pangs of affectionate wishes for grace: "Oh, that I were holy and gracious! Oh, that my heart were changed and renewed! Oh, that I were better, and could do better!" Let every man appeal to his own conscience, whether, when he hath been convinced of the excellency and desirableness of holiness, he hath not breathed forth such wishes as these. When you have seen a Christian, eminent and exemplary for piety, have you not wished yourself in his condition; not only in respect of his future reward and glory, but also in respect of his present grace and holiness? and wished not only with Balaam to *die the death of the righteous,* and that your latter *end may be like his;* but also to live the life of the righteous? and yet still you continue, notwithstanding these wishes, in the same sinful course and state as formerly you did. Now these are but empty velleities, and idle wishings and wouldings. An unregenerate man may possibly wish he were a saint; as a man may wish he were an angel: but such a man's wishes put him not upon any serious and constant attempting of the means whereby he may become so. No man, that wishes he were an angel, is thereby put upon the means of making himself an angel: so, many wish they were saints, but never put themselves upon the use of those means, that might make them such. Generally, their wishes and sighs vanish away together, and the one leave no more impressions on their hearts, than the other do in the air: they run to the commission of sin, even with a wish in their mouths that they might not commit it; and they neglect duty, and yet at the same time wish they were performing it. Such contradictory wishes have they! They wish themselves holy; and yet they are willingly sinful: they wish themselves better; but yet they never endeavour and strive after their own amendment. These are idle and empty wishes and velleities; and are no good evidences of a man's Regeneration.

2dly. An unregenerate man may not rest in these slight wishes but he may rise up to resolutions.

He may be resolved, that lust shall no longer enslave him, that the pleasurrs of the world shall no longer bewitch him, that the difficulties of religion shall no longer fright him; but that he will break through all, and that he will act like a man and a Christian. With such generous resolutions as these, men, that are in a sinful estate, may fortify themselves. Grace they know they must have, or they must eternally perish: and they know, withal, that God doth not use to be wanting to men's endeavours; and they are peremptorily resolved, therefore, that they will not be wanting to themselves. See the same strong resolutions, in those, that came to enquire of the Prophet Jeremiah, in ch. xlii. 5, 6; *The Lord,* say they, *be a true and faithful witness between us,* that *we* will *do even according to all things, for the which the Lord thy God shall send thee to us. Whether it be good or....evil, we will obey the voice of the Lord our God:* and yet, in the next chapter, you find none so rebellious against God, as these men, that had formerly made this remonstrance.

3dly. But, yet, notwithstanding these wishes and resolutions, the will of an unregenerate man falls short of a saving change; usually in some of these particulars.

(1st) In that it is fickle and inconstant.

Their desires may sometimes be violent and eager, as if they would take heaven by force, and wrest mercy out of the hands of God: their prayers may be so importunate and earnest, as if they would take no denial from God: but yet this volatile spirit is soon spent, and this full bent of their souls soon flags; and they return to the road of as dull and formal a profession as ever, and it may be to the commission of the same foul gross sins as before. Such a will as this, though at first it seems to hurry men on apace, yet soon tires and leaves them far short of grace. A Christian's race is not run at so many heats, but by a constant course and progress; still getting ground upon lust, and approaching daily nearer to the kingdom of God. It is with such men, as I have sometimes told you it is with the sea: which, when it is spring-tide, covers all its shores; but, when it ebbs, it discovers that there is nothing but sand, where it seemed to be a deep sea before. So, these ebbing flowing Christians discover plainly, that there is nothing but a barren sand at the bottom: they are unstable as water, and cannot excel; as Jacob speaks of Reuben, Gen. xlix. 4. A Christian is not made in a fit: nor is Regeneration wrought in a passion; but it is a settled, solid, and constant frame of heart, that brings a man unto Christ, and makes him persevere to be a new creature.

(2dly) The will of an unregenerate man is never universally changed; but he reserves still to himself some lust or other, that he will not part with.

His resolutions are such as were the resolutions of Naaman the Syrian: 2 Kings v. 17, 18; *Thy servant,* says he, *will henceforth offer neither burnt-offering nor sacrifice unto* any *other* god, *but unto the Lord.* But, *in this thing, the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth* to worship in the house of Rimmon, *and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon....the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing.* So, many peremptorily resolve to forsake their sins; but yet still there is some one dear lust or other, concerning which they cry out, with Naaman, *the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing:* all their other sins they will willingly sacrifice to Christ, may they but be allowed to retain this one sin. Now that thin partition, that any one sin makes betwixt the soul and Christ, will keep it from ever closing with Christ: as, if there be but a thin film betwixt the scion and the stock, they can never be engrafted and grow together.

(3dly) The will of an unregenerate man is usually very irrational.

He would obtain the end; but yet he will not use the means. Grace, he would willingly have; but you cannot bring his averse will to close with the performance of those unpleasing and irksome duties, wherein God usually bestows grace. Could they be holy with a wish, and suddenly metamorphosed to other men, none should be better Christians than themselves: could they enter into heaven by being willing to have it, none should shine higher in glory than they: but, when so much hard and unpleasing work must be done, first that they may be regenerate, and then after that they are regenerate to perfect them for glory, they look upon these things at a great distance and afar off; and so they sit down with idle wishes, far short of grace and glory.

(4thly) The will of an unregenerate man is usually a general, not a particular will.

If God should ask them, "Sinners, what would you do to be saved?"—"Oh, any thing, every thing," say they.—"Leave off such and such a sin: perform such and such duties."—"Yes, Lord: we will do any thing, but this duty; or leave any thing, but that sin." Just so is it with many men: they will do any thing, every thing in general; but, bring it down to particulars, to the doing of this or that duty, or to the leaving of this or that sin, and then they are willing to do just nothing.

And thus you see how far the will itself may be wrought upon in unregenerate men, and what it is that usually hinders this change from being a thorough work of Regeneration.

(5) There may be also a great and wonderful change wrought in their Lives, and yet they may continue in their former unregenerate state.

They may have *escaped*, as the Apostle speaks, *the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of Christ*, and yet be *again entangled*; which shows them to be unregenerate: as it is in 2 Pet. ii. 20. To escape the pollutions of the world is no argument of the truth of grace, unless yourselves also are cleansed from the pollutions of your own hearts: for sins may be left merely from external, forced principles; such as are the terrors of conscience, or the heavy judgments of God; when God sets a flaming sword, betwixt a sinner and those sins, that he counted his delight and paradise. To leave sin upon such constraints as these, is to leave sin with a great deal of reluctancy and unwillingness: as a mariner, in a storm, casts his goods overboard: he doth it, indeed, with a kind of will; but it is with an unwilling willingness: he is frightened and terrified to it, for fear he and they should sink together. So, when a soul is tossed in a tempest of divine wrath, ready to split against the rock of ages, and to sink and be swallowed up in a sea of fire and brimstone, it is forced to lighten itself, and to cast this and that dear lust overboard; and this it doth from a will: but, yet, it is with such a forced will, as that with which the mariner throws his goods into the sea in a storm; and, as soon as the tempest is allayed, the one gathers up his wreck, and the other gathers up his sins again. These men leave their sins, as Lot's wife left Sodom: they dare not longer continue in them, for fear fire and brimstone should rain down upon them; and, yet, in leaving them, they give many a look back towards them, and at last they return again to them. I have spoken to this formerly on this subject: I shall not therefore insist on it longer now: only, be sure you rely not upon these broken reeds, as evidences of eternal life and glory; for these things are deceitful, and have deceived many, at least for a time.

And, so much, for the First Branch of this Use or Trial; which was to show you what changes may be wrought upon carnal men, which they may mistake for evidences of their Regeneration.

2. The Second Branch of this Use of Trial, is, *to lay down some particulars, that the Scripture hath made infallible Marks and Tests of a Regenerate Person.*

(1) But, before I come to mention these in their particular order, it will be expedient, briefly to premise something concerning the manner of obtaining Assurance of Grace, by the Signs and Characters of Grace.

[1] It is possible for a Christian to attain an assured knowledge of his Regeneration.

I say, an assured knowledge, to carry it higher than the Papists do, who allow no more than a conjectural probability; which may well enough preserve from despair, but yet doth not exclude all fears and doubtings. But it is no wonder, that they, who will not trust their natural senses in the doctrine of Transubstantiation, should not much less trust their spiritual senses in the doctrine of Assurance. A Christian's assurance is many degrees above these weak guesses; and arrives at a far greater certainty, than any demonstration can be: for the evidence of sense and reason is not so clear as that of assurance is: the testimony, that sense and reason give, is but human; but the testimony given in a Christian's assurance is divine, and therefore is far more certain and more infallible.

The Apostle groundeth the evidence of assurance upon the divinity of the witness, in Rom. viii. 16; *The Spirit itself* (mark that) *beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.* What greater ground for assurance can there be than this? *The Spirit itself beareth witness:* and what God speaks is infinitely more certain, than that, which our very eye sees: and therefore it is very injurious to his truth and veracity, when he, by the secret and sweet whisperings of his Spirit, informs the soul, that it is in a state of grace, to think that this testimony only gives probable guesses and conjectures. The witness, that the Spirit gives, is such a full assurance, as removes all doubts and fears; for it is the witness of God himself.

Now such a witness as this is, a Christian may have; and therefore it is possible, and it necessarily follows also, that he may have a full assurance beyond all doubts and fears. Nor is this possible by a way of revelation, as a special privilege indulged only to some few, and them the choicest of God's servants: for, in 2 Pet. i. 10, the Apostle exhorts all Christians, to *give diligence to make* their *calling and election sure*, which he would never do, were it an impossibility, and could not be obtained with our diligence. So, in 2 Cor. xiii. 5; *Examine yourselves*, says the Apostle, whether *ye be in the faith: prove your own selves. Know ye not.....that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates:* Reprobation, in this place, by the way, doth not stand opposed to the decree of Election, as if none were elected but those that were already actually in Christ; but it stands opposed to Approbation, for God doth not approve of any in whom Christ is not formed: now, says the Apostle, since you know this, try and prove yourselves whether Christ be in you:

but it were a vain thing to put a Christian upon self-examination and trial, if there were no ordinary means to attain to the knowledge of it, but he must expect and depend upon some extraordinary revelation from heaven, a thing that is never but rarely given unto some few.

It is true, among Christians some may not have this assurance at all, and none have it at all times. As in a walk, that is shaded with tress and checkered with light and shadow, some tracks and paths in it are dark, and others are sunshine: such is usually the life of the most assured Christian. Sometimes, he walks in the light of God's countenance, and rejoices in the smiles of his favour; and, at other times, he walks in darkness, and can see no light: he steps out of the bright manifestations of God's love, into the umbrages of sad and cloudy apprehensions concerning his present state of grace and his future state of glory. So that some Christians never have any full assurance at all, and no Christian hath this full assurance at all times.

Now this inequality of assurance proceeds from a double cause.

1st. Sometimes, from the free and various dispensations of the Spirit, who is arbitrary in his workings; who is that wind, that bloweth when and where he pleaseth.

For the treasures, as well of comfort as of grace, are in his hand As the sun, he disposeth to the soul its summer and winter days according to his approaches to or recesses from it.

2dly. Sometimes, it ariseth from new contracted guilt, that blots our evidences; and makes them illegible, till it be taken off again.

It is frequent with Christians, when they have done sinfully or hypocritically, in one particular instance, then to begin to question all their sincerity; and, upon the prevalency of one corruption, to doubt of the truth of all their graces. We do not therefore affirm, that there is in all, or may be in any at all times, this full assurance: but, in some there is; and, in all, there is ground for it, and a possibility by diligence to attain it. *Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.* That is the first thing.

[2] The marks and signs of our Regeneration, in which the Scripture abounds, are, of themselves, insufficient to raise us to a full assurance, without the testimony of the Holy Spirit of God.

I doubt not but this appears very clear to those, who have taken pains to search out their spiritual estate by marks and signs. If the Spirit comes not in, to satisfy them by his own witness, they may soon run themselves to a loss; and, at the end, sit down as doubtful and perplexed as when they first began. As, for instance,

if a gracious soul should call into question the truth and sincerity of his love to God: and should begin to examine himself; "How shall I know whether I do indeed love God? Why, the Scripture tells me, by keeping his commandments, by obeying him sincerely. Yea, but the sincerity of our obedience is as difficult to be known, as the sincerity of our love: and how shall I know whether my obedience be sincere?" Now here, though many signs might be given as evidences of this, yet still the doubting soul will be driving itself from one sign to another, and never find satisfaction in any of them, unless the Spirit of God comes in by its undeniable witness to silence all its objections, and to resolve all its doubts by a kind of peremptory and discussive voice that it is so: otherwise, there is no end of looking after signs, for they will still leave the soul full of perplexities. Unless the Spirit of God comes in as a satisfactory witness, we may run from one sign to another sign to enquire after grace, whether it be there and there; and, when all is done, we may be as much at a loss concerning that sign, as we were at first concerning the grace which we enquired after.

And there are two reasons, why signs of grace, without the testimony of the Spirit, cannot work in us a full and absolute assurance.

1st. Because, usually, one grace is the sign of another.

Signs of grace are graces themselves; and, therefore, stand in need to be evidenced by other signs; and those signs, being graces too, do stand in need to be evidenced by others: and so we shall run to an *infinitum*, unless the Spirit of God, by his witness, puts a stop to this search.

2dly. Because most of the signs and evidences of true grace may be so exactly counterfeited by hypocrites, that the judgment, that we pass upon ourselves by these alone, will still leave place for perplexing doubts and fears, lest all our graces, and all our signs of them too, should be but hypocritical delusions.

So, then, unto a full assurance, there is necessarily required an inward peremptory witness of the Holy Ghost. Signs and marks, without his infallible testimony, are insignificant and unsatisfactory things.

[3] That assurance, that Christians have of their Regeneration, is not wrought in them merely by the testimony of the Spirit, without the help of signs and marks.

As marks and signs cannot raise up to a full assurance, without the Spirit of God; so neither do we obtain a full assurance merely by the testimony of the Spirit, without the help of signs and marks. For, to what end doth the Scripture so much abound in giving

characters of men's estates, which is the main scope and drift of the whole first Epistle of St. John? These were all superfluous, if the usual way of the Spirit's evidencing were without them. I am regenerated: but how come I to be assured of this? not barely because the Spirit testifies to me that I am so: that looks too much like enthusiasm, and a wild and groundless delusion. But the Spirit proceeds in a more rational way: I am a Christian and regenerated, because I find those marks upon me, that can belong to none but to such who are so. Indeed, all our assurance must be ultimately resolved into the alone verdict of the Spirit of God; and that, without the help of farther signs and marks: for when a Christian gains assurance, he doth not with the sun run through all the signs of the zodiac, to know if he be a Christian by this and this sign, and then to try the truth of that sign by another, and that other by a third, and so onward: that were endless and unsatisfactory: but when he is brought to signs that lie a remove or two off from the grace that he enquires after, he doth not usually make a farther search whether they be truly in him or not; but the Spirit darts in a clear and heavenly light, that discovers them to him, not discoursorily but only intuitively, so that he is able to say they are in me beyond all deceit.

[4] The usual way, whereby Christians come to be assured of their Regeneration, is by the joint testimony, both of marks and signs of grace, and also by the Spirit's witnessing to us that these marks and signs are in us.

The Word and the Spirit are the twin-lights, that discover to us our condition. And, as mariners presage to themselves a prosperous voyage, when two lights, Castor and Pollux, appear; but a dangerous voyage, if only one appears: so, here, it is unsafe, in the trial of our Regeneration, to take up with one single, solitary light; but, when both the light of Scripture marks and signs and also of the Spirit's witnessing appear together, we may then prosperously and happily proceed to a discovery of ourselves. So, in Rom. viii. 16; *The Spirit.....beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.* To evidence that we are born again, there comes in a twofold witness; the witness of our spirits, and the witness of God's Spirit: our spirit deposeth that we are so, that we are born again, and become the children of God; and this it doth, by observing the proper marks and characters, that the Scripture gives of a child of God: and the Spirit of God comes in as another witness, that, in the mouth of two witnesses, this may be established; and, by his immediate light, clears up the truth of that attestation, that con-

science did make; which takes away all doubting and hesitancy, and fills us with a full assurance, yea, gives us a plerothy. So that, still, marks and signs are of great use, for the discovery of the truth of grace: 1 John ii. 3; By this we *know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.* But, still, we may be puzzled to know, whether our keeping of God's commandments be such a ground for our comfort: therefore, the witness of the Spirit is here required, to seal and confirm this unto us; without which, still, we shall be to seek assurance, for all the marks that the Scripture lays down for evidences of our graces.

These things I thought fit to premise, before I give you any Signs and Marks of Regeneration: that so you may be exhorted and moved, when you hear those signs that the Scripture gives, to examine your hearts, whether they are transcribed within you; and also to lift up your hearts unto God, that his Spirit may dart into you such a spiritual light and clear illumination, as may infallibly demonstrate to you that these marks are indeed in you; it being the proper work of one and the same Spirit, to work grace in us, and to manifest it to us: it is he alone, that can draw that curtain that hangs before it, and give us a view of it. As it is the light of the sun only, by which we can see the sun; so is it the light of the Spirit only, by which we can know the Spirit to be in us. Let us, therefore, in the trial of ourselves look to marks and signs for a testimony in our own consciences; without which, all our assurance may be well suspected for enthusiasm: and let us also beg the testimony of the Spirit; without which, all marks and signs will be but vain and unsatisfactory.

(2) Now, to give you some Signs of the Truth of Grace, I shall not insist upon all that might be mentioned: for they are very numerous; since there is no one grace, but is the sign of another grace, yea the sign of all other, for all graces are concomitant. I shall only, therefore, select out a few.

[1] It is good sign of grace, when a man is willing to search and examine himself, whether he be gracious or not.

There is a certain kind of instinct in a child of God, whereby he naturally desires to have the title of his legitimation tried: whereas a hypocrite dreads nothing more, than to have his rottenness searched into. David therefore prays, Ps. xxvi. 2; *Examine me, O Lord, and prove me: try my reins and my heart.* God, indeed, hath many ways of trying us; but especially by the word and ministry: the Scripture is the great treasury of all spiritual light:

God hath amassed and stored it all up there: and whatever comes with spiritual illumination upon the conscience must borrow it from thence: the preaching of the word is the darting abroad of those beams, that pierce into the very entrails of sinners, and discover the secret thoughts and intents of their hearts.

Now try yourselves by this. Do you love the word of God, because it is a searching word? because it brings home convictions to you, and shakes your carnal confidences and presumptions? Do you love a soul-searching ministry, that speaks as closely and particularly to you, as if it were another conscience without you; a ministry, that ransacks your very souls, and tells you all that ever you did? Do you delight in a ministry, that forceth you to turn inward upon yourselves; that makes you tremble and look pale at every word, for fear it should be the sentence of your damnation? This is a sign, that your condition is good, because you are so willing to be searched. He, *that doeth evil,* saith our Saviour, John iii. 20. *hateth the light; neither cometh* he to it, *lest his deeds should be reproved.* But, if you are pleased only with a formal, general ministry; and such prophets, as sing only pleasant songs to you; such, as never touch the conscience to the quick, that keep aloof, and, instead of brandishing the word that is *sharper than a two-edged sword,* reaving the heart with it, only make a flourish of it: if you can brook no other, but such a quiet, unconcerning ministry as this is, this is a bad sign, that yet you are unsound. A thief hateth the light, says our Saviour, lest he should be detected and discovered: so a hypocritical professor hateth that a beam of spiritual light, by the ministry of the word, should break in upon his conscience, to show how rotten and unsound he is.

And that is the first trial. It is a sign of a good estate, when a man is willing to put himself on the trial.

[2] Love to those, who are truly godly, is a certain and infallible sign of Regeneration.

1 John iii. 14. *We know that we* are *passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.* This is a certain sign, that a mighty change is wrought on the heart: for, naturally, we are inclined to hate the children of God, upon that very account because they are godly. It is a true rule of the Schoolmen, borrowed out of Aristotle, That the affections of the soul are the same towards the image of a thing, as they are towards the thing itself: if we love or hate any person, we shall accordingly love or hate his picture and resemblance: now all wicked men naturally hate God, because he is a holy God, and thereby is contrary to their very natures, that are

corrupt and sinful; and so they also hate the children of God, because they are living pictures of God, and bear his image upon them, being made conformable to him by a work of Regeneration. *He, that* is *born* of *the flesh*, says the Apostle, will persecute and hate *him that* is *born after the Spirit;* because he is the copy of that original, betwixt whom and them there is an antipathy founded in their very natures. Now when a man, who before did thus hate, scorn, and despise the people of God, as a company of affected and turbulent hypocrites, shall find in himself a love and esteem for them, and shall see the beauty and glory of that holiness that before rendered them odious to him: this is a sign, that, certainly, a mighty change is wrought upon that man; and that he himself is transformed into the image of God, because he loves that image in others.

Now this trial will proceed upon these Three particulars.

1st. That this love be to them, because they are godly.

We may possibly love godly men, for other respects; because they are wise or learned, or because possibly they love us, or are related to us: but these are but by-respects, and grace hath no interest at all in them. That love to the godly, that can assure us of being godly and regenerate, must be a love to the children of God, merely because they are godly.

2dly. As we must love them because they are godly, so the more godly they are the more we should love them.

My delight, says David, is in the saints, and in the excellent ones of the earth. The more holy a child of God is, if we love him aright, the more we shall love him.

3dly. If we love all, that are godly.

Not only those of our temper, constitution, and opinion in all things; but all of them: with a valuation and esteem for them, with a prizing love, which the image of God upon their souls and their similitude to him challenge. Indeed, our familiarity and intimacy may be with some of them, more than with others; but our high and cordial esteem must be of all of them.

Now try yourselves by this. Do you love the brethren? And so little, truly, is this love to be found, that the name of Brethren is become a mock and a jest by many! But is your delight in the saints? Do you account them the excellent ones of the earth? How few are there, that love them, that love God! or, if they do love them, possibly it is for other respects and reasons: could you not love them better, if they were not so rigid, strict, and precise as they are? Let such know, as St. John speaks, in 1 John v. 1. He, *that loveth him that* begetteth, *loveth him also that is begotten.* It is

in vain to think that we are born of God, if we have not a sincere and cordial affection for all those, that are the children of God, and our brethren.

[3] Another sign of Regeneration, is a universal Respect and Obedience unto all God's Commandments.

This St. John expressly gives us, in his first Epistle, chap. ii. ver. 3; *Hereby,* says he, *we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments:* and so, in ver. 5; *Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.*

It is observable, that the work of Regeneration is itself called the writing of the Law in our hearts, in Jer. xxxi. 33; *I will put my law* into *their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.*

God hath written his Law three several ways. When he first created man, he wrote it then upon his heart by his creating finger: man was the transcript of God: as he was his handy-work, so he was his hand-writing also: man was then the only copy of the Law extant in the world: this copy was perfect; but yet it was such, as might be blotted and torn. Next, God wrote his Law in his word: the Holy Scriptures exhibit to us an entire system, both of commands and duties: and this copy is both perfect and durable; such, as neither hath suffered, nor can suffer, any decays from length of time, or from the rage and malice of men or devils. And, lastly, God hath again wrote his Law upon the heart of man, in his new creation: and this copy is eternally durable; but yet it is but as a writing upon sinking and leaky paper, which in this life is very obscure and full of blots.

Now this writing of the Law upon our hearts, is a figurative expression: and denotes nothing else, but an inclination, joined with some ability, to fulfil the commands of God contained in his word; a conformity, betwixt the commands of the Law and the affections of the heart, that, whatever the Law enjoins, the heart also desires and delights in. Thus David explains it, Ps. xl. 8; *I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.* So that the heart of a regenerate person answers to every tittle in the Law, with sincere desires at least to perform it. And as, betwixt an indenture and the counterpart of it, there is an exact correspondency word for word; such an exact correspondency is there betwixt the Law of God and the heart: whatever the Law commands, the heart readily embraces and endeavours to fulfil. This harmony is expressed by David in Ps. xxvii. 8; *When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said.....Thy face, Lord, will I seek.* This is to have the Law of God written on the heart; which is the proper work of Regeneration.

Let us now, therefore, try whether our conformity and obedience to the Law and will of God written in his Word, be such as may give us good ground to hope, that his Law is also written in our hearts in our Regeneration.

There is, therefore, a Twofold obedience to God's commandments: first, Perfect; secondly, Imperfect, but yet sincere.

1st. There is a Perfect Obedience: such, as carries in it an absolute perfection, both of parts and degrees.

To make up this, Two things are required.

That it be such an obedience, as is stretched forth to the utmost latitude of all God's commands: such, as is fully commensurate to the fullest bounds of duty; so as to leave nothing undone, that the Law requires.

That it be such an obedience, as is wound up to the greatest intenseness of spiritual love and delight in the performance of it; insomuch, as not to permit in the least any carnal ends, any straggling thoughts, or any wavering and unfixed affections at all so much as to breathe upon it. And this the Scripture calls a serving of God with all our hearts, and minds, and souls: Deut. x. 12.

This is obedience, that is absolutely perfect and universal; both in respect of the object, and also in respect of the subject.

Now, here, I shall lay down Two particulars.

(1st) That, in the examining of our Regeneration, we must not proceed by this absolute and perfect obedience; so as to conclude we have no grace, because we have some remaining sin.

Obedience to God's commandments is a sign of Regeneration, where it is not thus consummate and blameless. Nay, indeed, never any man since the Fall did or can keep God's commandments, in this absolute and perfect manner, Christ only excepted: *There is no man that* liveth and *sinneth not:* 1 Kings viii. 46. It is true, we are commanded, in Matt. v. 48, to be *perfect, even as* our Heavenly Father *is perfect;* but, as soon may a clod of earth shine as bright as the sun, as we who have sinful natures ever attain to a sinless state in this life. And yet such an excess of commands as these are, though they are impossible; yet are they not unjust, nor unuseful. They are not unjust: because God commands nothing that is simply in itself impossible, but is equally proportioned to that strength which he at first gave us; and, if we have wilfully lost our power of obeying, we have no reason to complain of God as rigid and severe, because he will not also lose his prerogative of commanding. Neither are they useless: because to command beyond what we are able to perform, proves a means to excite us

to perform so much at least as God will be pleased to accept; who always accepts sincerity in the desires and endeavors, where absolute perfection is wanting and unattainable: *If there be .....a willing mind,* says the Apostle, 2 Cor. viii. 12; *it is accepted according to* what *a man hath, and not according to* what *he hath not.* Let none, therefore, conclude that they have no grace, because they have many imperfections in their obedience. A weak child is not therefore a bastard or illegitimate: so, thy grace may be very weak and imperfect, and yet thou mayest be truly born again of God, and be a genuine son and heir of heaven.

(2dly) It is a good evidence of the work of grace in our obedience, when, though our obedience be very imperfect, yet we restlessly aspire, both in fervent prayer and in earnest endeavors, after the most absolute degree of perfection

Both of these must be concerned: for prayers, without endeavors, are but hypocritical; and endeavors will never be without prayers, or at least they will never be successful. If we pray with unfeigned desires, that God's will may be done by us on earth with the same fixedness, delight, constancy, and perseverance, as it is done by the saints and angels in heaven: if we rest not in our present attainments, nor sit down contented with what we have already; thinking that sufficient to defray our charges, and to bring us safe to heaven at last: if we think we have attained nothing, while there is any thing defective in us: if we strain every sinew, and bend every faculty of our souls, pressing forward to the mark for the prize of our high calling; and, with a holy impatience, breathe after farther measures of grace, still strengthening ourselves against lusts and temptations, and striving after the spiritual performance of duties: while we thus endeavor and strive, it may be a good evidence to us of our sincerity; and, in God's account, sincerity passeth for perfection.

Thus much, concerning the first sort of obedience, which is absolutely perfect. It is not attainable by Christians in this life: and, therefore, the want of it should not deject us with a suspicion of the want of grace: yet must we pray for it, and aim at it; and if we do so, it may be a good evidence of sincerity, which is evangelical perfection.

2dly. As for that obedience, that is attainable in this life, in imperfect measures and degrees, it becomes an evidence to us of our Regeneration in these following particulars.

(1st) When it is universal in respect of the Subject: that is, there must be an obedient frame and rectitude of the whole man both inward and outward.

[1st] Sincere and evidencing obedience must be internal, of the inward man; such, as may regulate the heart and conscience itself.

*The Law is spiritual,* says the Apostle, and reacheth the soul and spirit of a man: and, hence, says St. Paul, *I delight in the Law of God after the inward man.* There is a spiritual force in the Law of God, that, in a truly regenerate soul, checks all sinful thoughts, and quenches and damps the flames of sensual affections and desires. It judgeth those secret and retired motions of the soul, over which human laws have no command or prerogative.

Now examine yourselves by this. Do the commands of God pierce and insinuate into your inward man? Do they conform that to obedience? Dare you not cherish those sins in your souls, that possibly you dare not commit in your practices? Do you not dandle them in your thoughts, and hover and flutter over them in your affections? Are you not content with a fair and plausible appearance towards man? But do you labor also to approve your hearts unto God, and to bring every thought unto obedience to Jesus Christ? This internal obedience is a good evidence of the truth of that grace, which always begins with the heart, and from thence influenceth the life.

[2dly] Sincere obedience must be External.

It is a vain plea, to pretend, as many ignorant people do, that their hearts are good, when their lives abound with ungodly practices. The life is the index of the heart: and, as the hand of a dial never goes amiss, but the fault is in the wheels that move it; so the life is never disorderly, but the fault lies in the heart and in the affections, that are the wheels and springs that move it. *An evil man,* saith our Saviour, *out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth evil things.* True grace seasoneth the whole man; and makes a thorough change, both in the inward disposition, and also in the outward deportment: as it makes the thoughts holy, so it also makes the discourses savory, and the affections and conversation heavenly. Both must be conjoined in a regenerate person: for, the tendering unto God only an external conformity of the life when the heart is required, is but to mock God; and, to think that we please God with good affections when we take no care of our lives and practices, is but to mock ourselves.

Now try yourselves by this. Is your whole man, both soul and body, formed to the will of God? Do you serve him with your inward and with your outward man? Christ calls his law a *yoke,* and, certainly, it is a yoke, wherein both must be coupled. Do

you desire and endeavor to yield the obedience of the heart, and the obedience of the life also, as he requires: neither contenting yourselves with a slight and overly performance of duties, where the lips outrun the heart, and the heart gives the lie to the lips; nor yet slighting that outward reverence, that is necessary to testify the due sense which you have of his glorious presence, and that care which you have to serve him both in soul and in body that are his? Do you so live, as not to defraud God of any part of his service, or of his servant; but sacrifice yourselves entirely unto him: your bodies, upon the altar of your soul and affections; and both soul and body upon that altar, that alone can make both acceptable, even the Lord Jesus Christ? This is a good evidence, that you do so keep the commandments of God, as that it may be a ground of assurance to you that you do know him, and are in him.

And, so much, for the first branch.

(2dly) Obedience is a good and infallible sign of our Regeneration, when it is universal: as in respect of the subject, the whole man, soul and body; so, also, in respect of the Object, that is, the whole Law in every particular command of it.

The whole Law is contained in two things: in those duties, that immediately concern God; and in those duties, that do immediately concern men. Now if thy obedience be sincere, thou wilt have a general respect unto all God's commands: to those, that concern thy Lord and master; and, to those also, that concern thy fellow-servants.

Bring this also to the trial. Art thou just and upright in thy dealings with men? Art thou loving and helpful to thy neighbors? it is well. But what then is thy religion to God? is not that a dull and formal thing? is not this the best character that can be given of thee, that thou art a good neighbor, better to men than thou art to God? Again, if thou hast taken up a glorious profession of religion, and art frequent in those duties of it that concern God, what art thou then as to men? Religion hath of late suffered upon this very account, while the professors of it have acted high things in a way of duty, and pretended to high things in a way of enjoyment; but yet have been as unjust, oppressive, self-seeking, covetous, and over-reaching, as if their only reward were to live upon the spoil of others: thy religion to God, certainly, is no sign of grace, if thou art not also conscientious in thy dealings towards men: *Herein do I exercise myself,* says the Apostle, to keep in all things *a conscience void of offence* both to God and

men. But, more particularly, the duties, that respect others, are either general, as thou art a man to men; or particular, as to thy relation in which thou standest, relative duties. Now, how is it, that you perform these duties, that belong to thy special relation? for herein the life of Christianity is seen. How dost thou demean thyself, in the place where thou livest, as a magistrate, in checking sin and in punishing vice? how, as a minister? how, as a parent? how, as a yoke-fellow? how, as a child? and how, as a servant? Whatever a man doth, as to the general duties of Christianity, yet if he be negligent and careless in these particular relative duties, he hath great cause to suspect himself: it argues truth of grace, when we are careful in the fulfilling of these particular relations and stations, that we stand in towards others. I shall close up this note of trial with that of the Apostle, in James ii. 10, 11. He, that offendeth in one, is *guilty of all:* if there be a willing and indulging sloth, in the neglecting of any one duty that God hath commanded, how difficult and how opposite soever it be unto flesh and blood, that man hath ground to suspect, that, whatever other duties he performs, be they never so many and never so admirable, yet they are not such as manifest sincerity, and may give him a good evidence of a good estate.

[4] Another sign of Regeneration, which is the last that I shall mention, is that which St. John speaks of in his First Epistle, chap. iii. ver. 9, 10. *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the Devil.*

This place may, perhaps, be among the number of those, that had been more clear, if they had been less expounded. I shall only give you the genuine native sense of the words, and then proceed to manage them to my present purpose. *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.* Some from hence have concluded a possibility, at least, of a sinless state in this life: others, the infallible certainty of it; not only that a child of God might attain to such a perfection as is exclusive of all sin, but that whoever is a child of God cannot upon that very account be guilty of any sin: so like are errors to precipices, that, if a man lose his firm footing, usually he falls headlong; nor doth he stop, till he dash himself against the bottom and foundation of all religion and piety: had these men but seriously pondered what the same Apostle saith in his first chapter, vv. 8, 10; *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us:* And, *If we say that we have not sinned, we make* God *a liar,* they would not have entertained such

an over-weening conceit of a spotless perfection of life here; whereof the greatest part is no better than sin, and the best of it but too, too much defiled with it. Others interpret it thus: So long as we are the children of God, so long we cannot sin; and so the Papists go: but these go upon an erroneous supposition, that every mortal sin, as they call them, makes an intercision of justifying grace; and doth, as it were, annihilate the new creature. Others interpret it thus: *in quantum sumus Dei filii:* we cannot sin under that respect and notion, as we are the children of God; but even so far as we are, the best of us in the most part, unrenewed: though this is a certain truth, yet it is but a dilute and waterish exposition of this place; and it amounts to no more than this, that a regenerate man sins not as he is regenerate, that the principle of grace in him is not that principle from whence sinful actions proceed; and, certainly, no man, that considers the weight of this scripture expression, will think that the Apostle, by such an instance and ingemination, would press so thin a meaning as this is. The interpretation, therefore, that I judge to be the most natural and unforced is this: He, that *is born of God, doth not commit sin;* that is, he doth not sin in that malignant manner, in which the children of the Devil do: he doth not make a trade of sin, nor live in the constant and allowed practice of it. Neither can he thus sin, because *his seed remaineth in him;* that is, either the energy of the word of God whereby he is begotten again to a spiritual life, or the complexion of the graces of the Spirit that are as it were the seminary and seed-plot of glory. Nor he cannot sin, because *his seed remaineth in him:* this seed remains, and keeps him that he cannot sin; either as apostates do who totally forsake the ways of God, or as profane persons do who never embraced them. There is a great difference betwixt regenerate and unregenerate persons, in the very sins that they commit: all, indeed, sin; but a child of God cannot sin; that is, though he doth sin, yet he cannot sin after such a manner as wicked and unregenerate men do: there is a vast difference betwixt them, even in that wherein they do most of all agree: see that place in Deut. xxxii. 5. *Their spot is not the spot of his children:* even deformities themselves are characteristic: and a true Christian may come to know by his sins, that he is not a sinner. And, as they differ in the committing of sin, so much more in the opposing of it.

Let us, therefore, examine ourselves what evidences we have in respect of the keeping of ourselves from sin, that we are regenerated and born again.

1st. It is a good evidence of the work of grace, when our opposition against sin is universal. When we do, as David speaks of himself, *hate every false way.*

The reservation, indulgence, or allowance granted to any one known lust, is utterly inconsistent with a state of grace. One lust, that hath obtained your pass to go to and fro unmolested, and to traffic with the heart undisturbed, whatever opposition you may make against other sins, is a certain sign of a corrupt heart. One lust will serve as a spy, to hold intelligence with the Devil. A scion can never be incorporated into the stock, while there is the least skin or film betwixt them: no more can we ever be incorporated into Jesus Christ, if there be but the separation of any the least allowed sin to interpose betwixt him and us. Our opposition, therefore, must be against all sin. It is true, in our bodies there are such parts, that, if we were wounded in them, there need no other wounds to dispatch us, but the wound is instantly mortal; as, if a man be wounded in the heart, you need not strike him on the head: but, in the body of sin and death, there is no such wound: it is not sufficient to destroy the Old Man, that we wound him in any one part; but he must be made, as our natural state is described to be by the Prophet, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, all full of wounds and bruises.

Let us now try ourselves by this. Is there no lust, that your eye spares, nor that your heart pities? Doth the sword of mortification draw the heart-blood of every sin? When they fly for shelter into your bosom, can you rend them from thence, and slay them before the Lord? When they plead profit or pleasure, can you, with a holy disdain, destroy them with such arguments in their mouths? Can you then cut off a right hand, when it is lifted up to plead for mercy? Can you then pluck out a right eye, when it sheds tears to move you to compassion to it? If so, this is a good evidence of regenerating grace; whose proper effect it is, to beget an antipathy and hatred in the heart against all sin. But, if there be any one sin, that you allow and indulge in yourself, whatever other sins you may abstain from, assure yourself that the greatest change that is wrought upon you is only some external change of the life, but no change of the heart or state: still you are in your sins, if you allow yourself but in one of them. One allowed sin is vent enough for the Old Man to take breath at; and, while it hath a breathing-place allowed it, it is in vain to think that you have mortified and destroyed it.

2dly. As this opposition must be universal, against every sin

in general; so it must be, more especially, against the sins of the heart.

He, that will destroy a toad crawling on the ground, will much more destroy it should it crawl in his bosom. Now these sins are the bubblings up of evil thoughts, and the motions of evil affections and desires; those lurking and invisible lusts, that hypocrites may foster, and yet have a large testimonial of their saintship, to which all the world almost will be ready to set their hands. But this doth one, that is truly born of God, most of all complain of and strive against. In this, indeed, lies the most unerring test and trial of true grace. What the Apostle tells us, in Rom. ii. 28, 29, that is not *circumcision, which is outward in the flesh;* but that, which is inward, in the *heart* and *spirit*, the same may I say: it is not striving and struggling against sins, that are outward in the flesh; but against sins in the heart. A numbness may seize on the outward members of the body; when yet the heart beats strong and quick, and the brain works in sprightful and vigorous motions: so, truly, is it in this case: the Old Man may sometimes be benumbed in its outward limbs, and denied in its executive part; when yet the head may work busily in building and shaping sinful objects, and the heart eagerly beat and pant after them. It is, usually, the only care of a wicked man, to keep his lusts from raging and breaking forth into outward act: though his heart seethes and stews in malicious, unclean, worldly thoughts; yet these he regards and laments not, nor suppresseth, so long as he can but keep them from boiling over, and from raising ashes and smoke about him. But here lies the chief task of a regenerate person: for though it seem possibly an easy thing to destroy such little naked infant things as thoughts are that flutter up and down in the soul, and that light strokes would lay them dead; yet, certainly, a true Christian, who by experience knows what it is to deal with his own heart, finds it infinitely more difficult to beat down one sinful thought from rising up in him, than to keep a thousand sinful thoughts from breaking forth into open act. Here lies his chief labor, to fight against phantasms and airy apparitions, such as thoughts are: he sets himself chiefly against these heart-sins: because he knows these are sins, that are most of all contrary to grace, and do most of all weaken and waste grace: outward sins are but like so many caterpillars, that devour the verdure and flourishing of grace; but heart-sins are like so many worms, that gnaw the very root of grace: and, therefore, God calls upon Jerusalem, in Jer. iv. 14, *O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness.....how long shall....vain thoughts lodge within thee?*

Now try yourselves by this. In the opposition, that you make against sin, what is it, that you chiefly resist? Do you not content yourselves, that you have beaten corruption from the outward works into the very fort; that, whereas it sallied forth before at its pleasure and wounded your consciences, now it is pent up in a narrower room and compass? Do you not content yourselves with this? but do you still oppose it, and follow it into the heart; and, when it hides itself in a sinful thought, do you stifle and kill it there? If so, this is such an opposition, that proceeds from true grace, which works in you an antipathy against all sin. But, when a swarm of lusts is up, which perhaps some external principles only may keep from flying abroad: if they cluster in thy heart, and thou hivest them there: and if thou canst, for the satisfying of conscience, abstain from the outward acts of sins; and yet, for the satisfying of thy corruptions, canst also tolerate and allow the inward motions of sin: it is a sign that thou never knewest the power of regenerating grace: which first begins to cleanse the heart, as being the most compendious way and method to reform the life.

3dly. Look how you oppose those sins, that are more spiritual sins: such, as reside in the refined and exalted part of a man, his mind; but have little traffic or commerce with the dreggy part, his body.

Such are pride, envy, unbelief, hypocrisy, hardness of heart, slighting of Jesus Christ, and the like. These are spiritual wickednesses: and, if thou art truly regenerate, thy chief endeavors will be bent against these: for these are sins of the deepest and blackest guilt in themselves, though they are not branded so in the account of the world. And, therefore, when our Saviour rakes up the bottom of hell, who do you find lies there? Is it the drunkard, the unclean person; such sottish and swinish sinners? no: but it is the hypocrite, the spiritual and refined sinner: Mat. xxiv. 51. These are those sins, that are so inconsistent with the image of God upon the soul, that, of all other sins, they make men nearest to resemble the Devil: to be guilty of these sins, is to be a sinner like him. Those brutish lusts, wherein sensualists wallow, are not the proper sins of the Devil: no; they are intellectual sins, clarified from such dregs; such as pride, malice, hatred of God and goodness, and the like.

Now try yourselves by this. You rush not, possibly, *into the same excess of riot* with others: you resist and refrain from outward, gross, self-condemning sins: but do you strive against pride

hypocrisy, unbelief, and hardness of heart? If so, this is a good sign, that you are the children of God; unto whose spiritual nature, and unto yours also, these spiritual sins are most of all contrary. But, if you are only cleansed from the pollutions of the flesh, and not also from the pollutions of the spirit; if you indulge yourselves in pride, malice, murdering and revengeful thoughts, and the like; know, assuredly, that you do not bear the Image of God, but the Image of the Devil, whose peculiar sins these are.

4thly. A regenerate person bends his opposition, as against heart-sins and spiritual-wickedness; so also against his own iniquity, in a peculiar manner.

David produceth this, as a clear evidence of his integrity, in Ps. xviii. 23; *I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity.* Indeed, a child of God can have no sin his own, by any deliberate choice and approbation of it; as one culled and chosen out from the rest, and reserved for him to commit. Thus to have any sin a man's own, is inconsistent with true grace. But sin may be called a man's own, by a too frequent practice of it, and by a too violent inclination of his heart unto it. Every one of us hath his peculiar sin, that we may call our own, that is more deeply rooted in us than others are: whether they arise from the temper of our nature, or from custom that is a second nature, or from the verge and tendency of our callings and employments, or from what account soever they proceed; yet there are some sins, that a child of God may call his own, and against these doth he more particularly bend himself, and single them out unto the combat.

5thly. A truly regenerate person will be careful to avoid all temptations unto, and all occasions of sin.

And, therefore, in that prayer, that Christ hath taught us, we first pray, that we may not be led into tempation; and, next, that we may be delivered from evil. So is it the first care of a child of God, that he be not tempted; and his next care, how he may escape when he is tempted. It is a sign of a heart woefully entangled with the love of sin, when men choose to walk upon the very borders of sin and temptation; and, when they are under strong temptations, secretly please themselves with it, because now they think that they have some excuse if they yield.

6thly. Our opposition against sin is a good sign of the truth of grace; when it is not only universal against all sin, but universal from our whole man: when it is not only from our reason and conscience, but also from our will and affections.

For, in Regeneration, there is a principle diffused through the

whole man, that is contrary to sin, and destructive of it in every faculty. As it was with Elisha, when he stretched himself over the Shunamite's child; his eyes were against the child's eyes, and his mouth against the child's, yea, every limb in him corresponding to every limb in the child: so is it in a regenerate man; the New Man, that is spread all over and covers, as it were, the whole Old Man, limb for limb, is spread over every faculty of the soul and body also. It is not enough, that our consciences check us for sin; but the will and the affections must be bent against sin: the opposition must be from the whole soul, or it is not an evidence of the truth of grace.

Be exhorted, therefore, to deal impartially with your own souls. Look into your own state. Examine yourselves. Try whether Jesus Christ be formed in you. If your state be good, searching into it will give you the comfort of it. If your state be bad, searching into it cannot make it worse: nay, it is the only way to make it better; for conversion begins with conviction.

ii. Now if you have tried yourselves by any of these marks, either you find that you are such as are already passed from death to life, or that you are still in a state of sinful nature: accordingly, I shall direct to you A WORD OF EXHORTATION, and so shut up the whole subject.

1. *If you have a comfortable evidence of your Regeneration, that the Habit of Grace is indeed wrought in you, be exhorted to draw it forth, into Act. If you are born of God, live then as those that are the children of God.*

This exhortation I shall branch out into Three particulars.

(1) Endeavor, that the Graces of the Spirit be fruitful in Good Works.

Your corruptions are always vigorous and operative; and why should not your graces be so, much more? Grace is in you the ruling and prevailing principle: why should it not also be most active in you? Yet, so it is, as it was with Sarah and Hagar: Sarah, the free-born mistress, is barren; but Hagar, the bond-woman, is fruitful. So is it even in the children of God themselves: the noble, spiritual, and free-born part is usually barren and unfruitful; when the carnal and servile part is too fruitful, still conceiving, and still bringing forth. What is the reason, that corruption that is conquered should have a more numerous offspring, than grace that is triumphant? Grace is no sluggish, inactive principle; no; it is ethereal: it carries a divine and

heavenly fire in it; and tends as naturally to what is good, as the corrupt part doth to what is sinful: it hath a natural propensity to breathe itself forth into holy thoughts, holy affections, and desires. Do not you, then, be wanting to it; but stir up the grace of God that is in you: think how becoming a thing it is, when God hath framed you according to his image and likeness, that you also should frame holy thoughts and heavenly affections, according to God's likeness, and have a numerous progeny like unto him. But, alas! the children of God are much wanting to themselves, in this particular: if the Spirit, at any time, is impregnant upon their hearts with holy motions, how do they neglect and stifle them! so that there are but very few of them, but prove mere abortives. Our hearts, at last, will be found to have been the graves and sepulchres of thousands of holy thoughts and motions, which we have starved in their very infancy.

(2) Oppose Indwelling Grace against the prevalence and power of Indwelling Sin.

Grace is an immortal seed, that will certainly sprout up and flourish into glory: it is a living fountain, that will certainly spring up unto eternal life; a ray of heavenly light, that will wax brighter and brighter to a heavenly day. It is immortal, in its seed; victorious, in a spark; triumphant, in its dawn: yea, take it when it is weakest, when this dawn is clouded, when this spark twinkles, when this seed is unspirited; yet, even then, is it mighty through God, and is still an over-match for sin. To set grace against sin, is to set God against Satan, heaven against hell, the Spirit against the flesh: and what odds can any Christian desire more? Have we a principle of grace in us, which will go forth conquering unto conquer, and will assuredly crown us with victory; and shall we not bring it to the trial? Yea, let me tell you, you must detain grace in unrighteousness, and depress and keep it under by violence, if you do not prevail with it: if you do not strive against your sins, you must strive against your graces; and, therefore, it is the greatest shame in the world, for you, that have a principle of grace in you, that principle that shall never totally be overcome, basely to yield to any temptation or lust whatsoever.

(3) Be exhorted also, since you are born of God, to live as becomes the Children of God, and to express your Heavenly Parentage by your Heavenly Conversation.

I have formerly, in the handling of this subject, told you that we are the children of God, two ways; by Regeneration, and by Adoption: adoption gives us the inheritance of children; and

regeneration gives us the nature of our Heavenly Father. As we then bear the relation of children, so let us have the affections of children.

[1] Let us possess our hearts with a Filial Fear and Reverence of God.

God calls for this, in Mal. i. 6; *If...I be a Father, where is mine honor?* And so the Apostle, 1 Pet. i. 17; *If ye call God Father..... pass the time of your sojourning here* with *fear.* This holy awe and fear of God will be a great check upon us, when we are apt to grow wanton and extravagant. Children, whatsoever they do at other times, yet will strive to deport themselves respectfully in the presence of their father. Consider you are always in the presence of your Heavenly Father, who is omnipresent: he is with you wherever you are: his eye is upon you, whatever you are doing. Oh, therefore, behave yourselves with that holy reverence and composedness, which becomes so awful a presence as his. Thou, who wouldst abstain from any lewd and unbecoming action before the reverent face of thy earthly parents, wilt thou not much more reverence the all-controlling looks of thy Heavenly Father? There is not a thought in thy heart, nor a word upon thy tongue, but God knows it altogether; and if this be not a most powerful restraint to keep thee from evil, know this, that the very immodesty of thy sinning is a clear proof that thou art no child. When Joseph's brethren committed that horrid fact of selling him, they contrived how they might hide it from the knowledge of their father: doubtless, if the authority of Jacob's presence had been with them, it would have overawed them from that wickedness. Behold a more awful and dread Father than Jacob was, is always with you: and, therefore, since you can hide none of your sins from your dread Father's sight, be careful that you commit none in his sight.

[2] Imitate your Heavenly Father, in his Goodness and Bounty unto all.

He is kind to the froward, and to the disobedient: He causeth his sun to shine upon the good and upon the bad, and doth good both to the just and to the unjust. Should God have avenged all those petulant wrongs and those arrogant affronts, that sinners have done against him, the whole world ere this time would have been utterly destroyed; but he hath not left himself without witness: it is the witness of his patience and forbearance, that the sun yet shines upon us, that the air supports us, that the heavens give forth their cherishing influences to us. Here is a pattern for you to imitate. Alas! you cannot be so much injured by men, or so bene-

ficial to men, as God is: they depend no more upon you, than you do upon them; but we all depend upon a patient and forbearing God; and yet we are apt, upon every slight provocation, to break forth into fire and fury: this is not the disposition of God, neither should it be the disposition of his children: the divine nature, whereof we are made partakers, prompts us to be long-suffering, and full of bowels of mercy and compassion, and is pleased when it can, like God, forgive others. Jesus Christ, who had all the host of heaven and earth in pay under him, and could have commanded whole legions to have secured and revenged himself: yet, when he was, under his sufferings, hanging upon the cross, how patiently did he endure the scoffings, shoutings, and mockings of men; and open not his mouth otherwise than in prayer for them! *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do: When he was reviled, he reviled not again.* Imitate your Lord and Master, your God and Father; and, when the world reproaches you and persecutes you, show that you have learned one thing, that nothing but true godliness can teach you; to wit, that you are able and willing to forgive them.

[3] If you are the children of God, be Patient and Submissive under his correcting hand. Is it not thy Father that afflicts thee?

The Apostle argues this strongly, Heb. xii. 9. If we suffer our earthly parents to chastise us for their pleasure, how much more should we suffer patiently the chastisements of our Heavenly Father, who doth it only for our good, and if need be! Nothing puts a sharper sting into afflictions and makes them more intolerable, than to look upon them as punishments inflicted by an avenging God. The soul is not able to bear up under such afflictions, because then it looks upon the lightest and smallest evil that befalls it, to be but, as it were, the pledge and earnest of a far greater that is to ensue. But when we can look upon afflictions as the chastisements of a Gracious Father, this will enable us to bear them, not only patiently, but thankfully also; as being the testimonies and effects of his special love unto us; for, says the Apostle, he chastiseth *every son whom he receiveth.* The end, for which God casts thee into the furnace of affliction, is to purify thee from thy dross, not to consume thee: he knows what afflictions, and what measures of them, will best conduce to this end, for he is a Wise God; and he will bring no other affliction upon thee than what shall accomplish this end, for he is also a Gracious Father.

These Three Exhortations belong to those, who, by the signs before named or any other, have attained to some assurance that they are renewed and born again.

2. In the second place, let me speak to *such, as are yet in a Natural and Sinful Estate; in the same deplorable state of Sin and Misery, in which they came into the world.*

Unto these now I shall only direct a Twofold Exhortation, and so conclude the whole subject.

(1) Beware that you do not flatter yourselves with any Deluding Hopes of Heaven: you are, as yet, without any right to it.

This is, indeed, a dreadful caution: what! to beat men off from their hopes of heaven! And, commonly, it proves as fruitless, as it is dreadful: men's hopes, of all things, frequently deceive them: they maintain themselves with little, especially the hopes they have of heaven; and they live either upon weak probabilities, or upon strong fancies. And, hence, the Scripture compares the hope of a hypocrite to *a spider's web:* Job viii. 14: men spin their hopes out of their own bowels, and settle themselves in the midst of them, and doubt not but they shall catch heaven itself in their foolish cobwebs. Should I come and ask you all, one by one, Do you, and you, hope to be saved? where is the person, that would not, by his disdain at the very question, testify how high and how great his hopes are? Would not the drunkard, the swearer, the profane person, and the whole rabble of wicked and ungodly wretches speak as confidently of their salvation, as if they were born with sure proofs of heaven in their hands? what! are these men regenerate? or is the price of heaven fallen; and God become willing to part with it upon lower terms than the New-Birth? art thou regenerated, that hatest God and godliness, and all those that bear the least resemblance to the divine purity? art thou regenerated, that makest an impudent scoff at the same, and deridest the very title that fallen man hath unto happiness? is it likely, that the new nature should be hid under an old life? Regeneration is the ransacking of the soul; the turning of a man out of himself; the crumbling to pieces of the Old Man, and the new moulding of it into another shape: it is the turning of stones into children: and a drawing of the lively portraiture of Jesus Christ upon that very table, that before represented only the very image of the Devil. This mighty change is wrought by Regeneration. Man's partaking of the divine nature is the greatest change, that ever was wrought in heaven or in earth, unless it were God's partaking of the human nature. Art thou thus changed? are all old things done away, and all things in thee become new? hast thou a new heart and renewed affections; and dost thou serve God in newness of life and conversation? if not, what hast thou to do with hopes of heaven? thou

art yet without Christ; and so, consequently, without hope? Sinners, what is it that you trust to? Is it your own good works? this, indeed, is the common refuge of those, that have fewest good works to produce: but, alas! what confidence canst thou repose in these, when the very prayer of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord? Is it the merit of Christ, that you rely upon? why Christ becomes a Saviour to none, but to those in whose hearts he is first formed. Is it some slight and general notions of God's Mercy, that you trust to? it is true, God is infinitely merciful, though he hath already damned thousands for their sins; and he will remain forever infinitely merciful, when thou also art damned among them: it is in vain to press the mercy of God to serve your foolish hopes, against that inviolable truth of his, that hath excluded you out of heaven: *Except* you be *born again*, you can in no wise *enter into the kingdom of God.* This is that irreversible sentence, that is written on heaven-gates: no entering there, but by passing first through the New-Birth: no dogs nor swine must come into that holy city; and such are all unrenewed persons: yea, the Scripture calls them the children of the Devil: John viii. 44; *Ye are of your Father, the Devil:* and, certainly, that God, who hath chased devils out of heaven, will never admit any of his rude offspring into it. And therefore let me, in the first place, exhort you not to flatter yourselves into hell and destruction, with false and deluding hopes of heaven.

(2) Give no rest, either to God or to yourselves, till this thorough change be wrought upon you in your Regeneration.

It is, as you have heard, of absolute necessity unto eternal salvation; and, unless you think that salvation itself is not of absolute necessity, what can be the reason, that you trifle and dally in that, which is of so vast a concernment? What is it that you can plead for yourselves? Is it, that it is not within the compass of your power to regenerate yourselves? it is true: but, although you cannot form this new nature in you, why do you not yet do your utmost to prepare and dispose yourselves to receive it?* Though we are all lamed and crippled by our fall which we took in Adam, yet such cripples as we are may notwithstanding make shift to get into that way by which Christ useth to pass, and may possibly be healed by him. It is a sure rule, Though God is not bound to give grace upon men's endeavors, yet neither is he wont to deny it: do you expect that this change, like that of the surviving saints at the Last Day, should pass upon you ere you are aware of it, *in a mo*

* See Article x. and Article xiii. of the xxxix. Articles.

*ment, in the twinkling of an eye?* it is true, man's change of heart is the greatest miracle that God works in the world; but yet, he works it in an ordinary way, by our own endeavors, as well as by his own irresistible and victorious grace: and, therefore, God calls upon us, Ezek. xviii. 31; *Make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die?* Do not therefore cheat your souls into eternal perdition, by such lazy conceits of your own weakness and impotency. Do not content yourselves with a few yawning, drowsy wishes; expecting till divine grace doth of its own self drop down out of heaven, and of its own accord change your hearts: possibly, before that time you yourselves may irrecoverably drop into hell. Will you lose your souls forever, only out of a wretched sloth? doth one end of them lie burning as a brand in hell-fire, and will you not stretch out your hand to pluck it thence? believe it, so long as you continue in a sinful state you are wrapped about with ten thousand curses: the wrath of God is continually making its approaches unto you; and there is only a thin mud wall of flesh to fence it out, which is still mouldering and falling away, and whether it will be able to hold out one day longer you know not: you hang over the bottomless pit, only by the weak thread of a frail life, which is ready to be snapped asunder every moment; and, if some consuming sickness should fret this thread or some unforeseen casualty should break it off suddenly, if death work a change upon you before grace works a change in you, of all God's creation you are the most miserable: better, that you had been the most loathsome creature that crawls upon God's earth, yea better that you had never been, than that you should forget and neglect this great work of renovation one moment too long. Therefore, use no delay: every moment, that is not this present, is too long a delay: while you are dreaming of repentance and converting, some months or possibly some years hence, God may snatch you away before the next sand is run in time's glass; and where are you then? *Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation:* whatever is not now, may be too late; and, ere that time comes that you have prefixed to yourselves, God may set up your souls as flaming monuments of his displeasure, justice, and severity in hell forever.

If you ask me what you shall do to be renewed, I answer, the directions are not many: take only these Two.

[1] Be instant with God, by Prayer, that he would, by his omnipotent grace, new create you to himself, and stamp again upon you his effaced image.

There is a prevalence in the prayer of a mere natural man,

when he prays for grace: else St. Peter would never have exhorted Simon Magus, who was *in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity*, to pray that so the thought of his heart might be forgiven him.

[2] Improve diligently, all the Means of Regeneration; whereof the Word is the chief.

*Of his own will begat he us* by *the word of truth*, says the Apostle: Jam. i. 18. Attend it constantly: meditate upon it frequently: endeavor frequently to practise it. This hath been the way, in all ages, that hath proved itself successful for the bringing in of sinners unto God. Heaven is full of happy souls, that have been fitted for that glorious estate, by such very ordinances as these, under which you now sit. It is true, these are not of themselves a sufficient means: alas! what is the weak breath of a poor man, to make impressions upon hearts that are harder than the nether mill-stone? What can we do, to give sight to the blind, and life to the dead? but only God who demolished the walls of Jericho by the sound of a few rams' horns, doth likewise make use of the preaching of the Gospel to demolish the strong-holds of Satan; which would have been as impertinent and as insignificant a sound as that was, had not God put his institution upon it, and his Spirit into it. Wait upon the ordinances, therefore; that that happy soul-saving word may at length be spoken, that may cause thee to arise, and to stand up from the dead. Endeavor to do whatever lies in thy power, in order to thy Regeneration. It is true, it is not in our power to make ourselves new creatures; but when God sees thee conscientiously improving that power that thou hast, he will then give thee that power that thou wantest. Never yet was there an instance of any, that did vigorously to their utmost labor after grace, that did not also leave some good evidences behind them that they did obtain it: and, certainly, thou hast no reason to think, that God will make thee the first instance and precedent to the contrary.

So much, for this time, and for this subject.

# THE DOCTRINE OF THE TWO SACRAMENTS.

## INTRODUCTION.

Bishop Hopkins's tract, on the Doctrine of the Two Sacraments, shows the same candor and straightforwardness which characterize his more elaborate works. It furnishes no exception to the clear and evangelical teachings for which all his writings are distinguished. Theological and Ecclesiastical terms are used with freedom, and with an apparent want of caution always discernible in writings whose authors were not obliged, by the circumstances amid which they wrote, to treat the subjects of discussion in a controversial manner.

The author handles all the topics connected with the Sacraments, and lays down his propositions in the language of the Scriptures, and of the Catechism and Liturgy of the Church. Thus we find a clear distinction between "the outward and visible sign" and "the inward and spiritual grace." He terms the reception of the former, when speaking of Baptism, "an Ecclesiastical regeneration," "an external sanctification;" and those who have been baptized are entitled to be called "members of the visible Church," and "Ecclesiastical saints." Of the latter he speaks decidedly and earnestly, and teaches that without it the ordinance of Baptism is not saving. It is "an internal, real, and spiritual sanctification.... when the Holy Ghost doth infuse into his (the recipient's) soul the habits of Divine Grace, and maketh him partaker of the Divine nature, whereby he is inwardly qualified to glorify God in a holy life."

This spiritual regeneration is not a mere change of state, or of covenant relation, but a change of nature: "A mighty change," "the greatest change that ever was wrought in heaven or on earth, unless it were God's partaking of the human nature." "The external and Ecclesiastical sanctification is effected by Baptism, *ex opere operato*, by the mere administration of the Holy Sacrament, while the internal and habitual sanctification is not," but is wrought by the Holy Ghost moving upon the face of the waters.

The connection between the two is maintained to be contingent, and not necessary and absolute. He judges it to be "unsound doctrine, to affirm, that Baptism doth confer real sanctification upon all infants, as well as upon some adult persons, who are made partakers of it." Thus while Baptism is the means of external sanctification to all who receive it, and is the means of an internal and real change of nature when the Spirit of God useth it for that end, yet "it is not *so* the means of an internal and real sanctification, as if all to whom it is administered, were thereby spiritually renewed, and made partakers of the Holy Ghost in his saving grace." The Sacraments, therefore, as means of grace, are governed by the same laws which regulate the other means and ordinances which God has appointed for the salvation of mankind.

In the treatise on the necessity of regeneration, or the new birth, it is set forth, that spiritual regeneration is a miracle of grace, whereby the soul of man is endowed with a new nature, furnished with holy principles and habits, and blessedly constrained and necessitated to love, choose, and serve God.

This new nature is active, and must exhibit its holy characteristics. It will not fail to do so, when opportunity is offered. In the following tract, the author asserts that, "they who have the seed of God in them shall never sin unto death; and the perseverance of those who are inwardly and effectually sanctified, is safe and certain." How comes it then to pass, that the greater part of those who have been baptized in infancy lead profane and unholy lives, and too, too many of them perish in their sins? How else can we account for this, than by the supposition that Baptism was not the effectual means of their spiritual regeneration? And while we dare not limit the Holy Spirit to any means which he hath appointed as the channels of his operations, nor say that He may not spiritually regenerate the infant at the time of water Baptism, yet facts make us believe that the ordinance is rarely, if ever, used by Him for that blessed and saving end. At least, a well-proven and authenticated instance of such use is yet to be produced.

# THE DOCTRINE OF THE TWO SACRAMENTS.

*That he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the word.* EPH. v. 26.

THE holy sacrament of Baptism, as it is our solemn entrance and admission into the visible Church of Jesus Christ; so is the doctrine of it, with very good reason, set as an introduction to that farther account of Christian faith comprised in our public Catechism.

And, indeed, it seems but reason, that we should begin our Christian profession, where we began our Christian race; and that the doctrine of Christianity should commence at the same holy institution, where we first took upon us the name and title of Christians.

I shall, therefore, through the assistance of Jesus Christ, who is "the Author and Finisher of our faith," endeavor to explain the principles of our religion contained in that brief summary, the Catechism; beginning with that of Baptism: wherein, as it is there expressed, we are "made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven."

These are high encomiums of this ordinance, and inestimable privileges conferred by it; and, to some, may possibly seem too lavish: yet I doubt not but to make it appear, that all these privileges do appertain unto us, according to the phrase of Scripture, by our being baptized into the Church and faith of Christ.

I have chosen this portion of Scripture, to show the great influence that Baptism hath upon our sanctification, by which it is, that we are made members of Christ, vitally joined by a holy band to a holy head. The words are brought in as a demonstration of the love of Christ to his Church, which the Apostle gives as a pattern for conjugal love and amity: He "loved the Church," so as to give "himself for it," as it is in the precedent verse. And the end of this unspeakable gift we find contained in this verse: "He gave himself for his Church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."*

Not to speak any thing of the context, nor to make any laborious and critical explication of the words, here be two things worthy of our observation:

* "ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς." For "her," better than for "it," as we find in the common version.

That one end, why Christ was given to the Church, is, that he might sanctify it.

That the means to sanctify the Church, are Baptism and the word.

As to the former of these, being alien from our present purpose, let it suffice to note briefiy, that Christ hath purchased for us not only eternal glory, but present grace, He, who hath called himself both "the Way and the Life," gave himself for us; not only to purchase life, but to lead us in the way tending to it. He died to procure heaven for all, if they would believe: but he died to procure grace for some, even his chosen ones, that they might believe and attain unto heaven and happiness. For their sakes, as he tells us, John xvii. 19, he sanctified himself: that is, he devoted and separated himself to undergo the cruel and accursed death of the cross: and, for his sake, God sanctifies us from our filth and pollution; thereby preparing us to enter into those mansions, which he is gone before to prepare for us.

But, that, which more concerns us at this time to observe, is, the means for effecting this sanctification: and they are two; the washing of water, and the word. By the former, I suppose, none will doubt but that Baptism is meant: or, if they should, yet so many other parallel places might be produced, where remission of sins, justification, and regeneration, are ascribed to this holy ordinance, as the effects of it, that it may be sufficient conviction that Baptism is likewise in this place understood by the *washing of water*. So, Acts xxii. 16; "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins," saith Ananias to Paul; which is no other than being sanctified and cleansed with the washing of water. So likewise, Acts ii. 38; "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." And Baptism is called, Tit. iii. 5; λουτρον παλιγγενεσιας: we render it, *the washing of regeneration:* "according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration:" but the word signifies, the bath of regeneration, which is that baptismal water wherein we are buried with Christ.

I. But, before I can come particularly to show you what sanctification it is, that we receive by Baptism; and how we are in it made the members of Christ, the children of God, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven, it is necessary, and I hope will be useful, to VINDICATE THE PRACTICE OF BAPTIZING INFANTS, against which some of late have eagerly disputed.

For, if the Church mistake in the persons to whom this ordinance belongs, certainly they can claim no privilege by virtue

of their having been baptized. And, therefore, since Baptism is usually administered to infants, let us briefly examine whether their admission to this holy and mystical institution be according to the precept of the Gospel; for, if not, how can they say, as the Catechism directs, that in their Baptism they were "made members bers of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven?"

Herein I shall,

Prove to you the lawfulness of Infant Baptism.

Answer some objections, that are plausibly urged against it.

Show you what are the uses of Baptism, and the ends for which it was ordained.

i. I shall begin with the ARGUMENTS, TO PROVE THE LAWFULNESS OF INFANT BAPTISM.

1. The first is this: *Infants are members of the Church of Christ; and, therefore, to be baptized.*

Two things are here to be proved, that Church-members are to be baptized; and, then, that Infants are Church-members.

(1) I suppose the former may be evidently demonstrated, because there is no other way of solemn admission into the visible Church but by Baptism; and, therefore, if the members of the Church ought to be solemnly admitted into the visible flock of Christ, they ought to be baptized. But, clear enough it is, that those who are Church-members, ought to be solemnly admitted into the visible Church of Christ. They are members of the Church, as a king is a sovereign, before his coronation; as a soldier is such, before his military oath. So, Baptism is our public and solemn inauguration into the kingdom of Christ; it is our military oath and sacrament, to be Christ's faithful soldiers and servants unto our lives' end.

(2) It only remains now to prove, that Infants are Church-members.

And that appears, because once they were so, and that privilege is not repealed; for, in the Church of the Jews, infants were a part of them, who entered into covenant with God. See Deut. xxix. 10, 11, 12. "Ye stand.....all of you before the Lord.....your little ones, and your wives, and the stranger.....that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God." It is not, nor indeed can it be, denied, that the Jews' children were members of their Church: consequently, then, the children of Christians must likewise be members of the Christian Church; unless it can be mani-

fested, that Christ hath repealed and recalled this privilege. No such repeal, I am confident, can be produced. Nor, indeed, can the repeal of such a privilege, as the being members of the Church, consist with greater mercy and goodness of God, revealed since Christ's coming, in comparison of what it was before. The children of the Jews were members of the Jewish Church, before Christ's coming into the world; but, if a Jew be converted to the faith, shall not his children be now members of the Church of God? if not, they are in a far worse condition since Christ, than they were before; which is little less than blasphemy.

Again, that the infants of believing parents are members of the Church of Christ, appears from this, that they who deny them to be members of the visible Church of Christ, must of necessity make them to be members of the visible kingdom of the devil: for there is no third estate on earth; but the kingdom of Christ, which is the Church, and the kingdom of the devil, divide all mankind between them. Those who are not of the Church, are of the world: since our Saviour affirms, that he hath called and taken his out of the world, and that *they are not of the world;* and the devil is called the god and the prince of this world. Therefore all, that are not of Christ's flock and of his Church, are of the world, and they belong to the kingdom of the devil: and so, by a very uncharitable, but yet an unavoidable consequence, if we deny infants to be members of Christ's Church, we must hold that they are all members of Satan, subjects of the kingdom of darkness, and in a desperate state of condemnation.

From all this it follows clearly, that the children of Christian parents are Church-members; and, being Church-members, they have a right to Baptism, which is appointed by Christ to be the standing ordinance for solemn admission into the visible Church. So that, when they are in our Catechism said to be made members of Christ in their Baptism, the meaning only is, that now they are owned and publicly acknowledged to be such, by their solemn admission into the society of Christians. They are Christians *nati;* born Christians, by the covenant: Christianity is their birthright, and their native privilege.

That is the First argument.

2. The Second argument to prove Infant Baptism may be formed thus: *Infants are Christ's disciples; and, therefore they ought to be baptized.*

That Christ's disciples ought to be baptized, I suppose none will deny: but that infants are Christ's disciples, is most evident from

the express words of Scripture. See Acts xv. 5. where it is said, there arose a great controversy in the Church; because that certain erroneous brethren, some converted Pharisees, persuaded them that it was still needful to continue the custom of circumcising their children. To decide this, a council of the Apostles and Elders assembled together; and in v. 10, we have their definitive sentence against the necessity of circumcision: "Why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" Now on whom would these Pharisees have laid this yoke? was it not on the disciples? And what was this yoke? was it not circumcision? And who were they, whom they would have to be circumcised? doubtless, all the Gentiles, who believed in Jesus Christ, both men and children: and, in following ages, especially, if not only, *children* were to have been circumcised, if this erroneous doctrine had prevailed. Well then, they whom these false teachers would have to be circumcised, were disciples: but it is plain that they would impose this, not only upon adult persons, but children; for that they required they should be circumcised according to the law of Moses; as verse 1. Now, according to the law and manner of Moses, all children, whether of native Jews or proselytes, ought to be circumcised the eighth day. And this, saith the Holy synod of the Apostles, is a yoke, that neither they nor their forefathers were able to bear. Not that circumcision itself, although a painful was yet an intolerable rite, but only as it was a sign and seal engaging them to keep the whole law of Moses, which was this pinching yoke and this insupportable burden, that the apostolical council decreed should not be put upon the disciples. And, therefore, either infants are disciples; or, notwithstanding this decree, they may still receive circumcision as an engagement to the observation of the Mosaical law.

3. Another argument *may be drawn from the text:* "He loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water." From whence I thus argue: Those for whom Christ gave himself that they might be saved, he doth likewise intend to bring to salvation, by sanctifying and cleansing them with the washing of baptismal water: but he gave himself likewise for infants, that they might be saved; for he expressly tells us, that *of such is the kingdom of heaven,* not only of their conditions, but of their condition; and, therefore, infants are ordinarily to be cleansed with the washing of water in Baptism.

I do not say that none can or shall be saved without Baptism.

That were too uncharitable an opinion and doom upon those, who are inevitably deprived of this holy institution. But this I say: that Baptism is the ordinary means appointed by God for the sanctifying and cleansing of those, for whom Christ gave himself to bring them to salvation. And, though the children shall not be damned for want of Baptism, yet, as King James said, I doubt whether the parents of them may not, for their neglect and contempt of it.

Many other arguments might be produced: but these may suffice in a place, where this great doctrine need not be laboriously proved; especially being such as cannot be sufficiently answered.

ii. Let us, therefore, in the next place, take into consideration some of the PRINCIPAL OBJECTIONS, THAT ARE MADE AGAINST INFANT BAPTISM.

Which I would not mention in a place where this practice is not contradicted, but that I know the evidence for it is abundantly superior to the cavils against it, and that you may be fortified against the fallacies of deceivers hereafter. For, in these broken and divided times, when the whim of men and their confident fancies have so far prevailed against the unity of the Church, God knows what they may next attempt: and plentiful experience hath shown, that anabaptism usually follows separation.

It is objected,

1. That "*Infants are not capable of the ends of Baptism; and, therefore, ought not to be baptized.* The end of Baptism is, to signify to the receiver of it, the washing away of sin by the blood of Jesus Christ: but infants, not having the use of reason, cannot possibly comprehend this significancy: and, therefore, it being to them an insignificant thing, it cannot be the ordinance of Christ that it should be administered to them."

To this I answer; that, although infants are not, as such, capable of all the ends for which Baptism was ordained; yet it doth not thence follow, that it is insignificant, and therefore unnecessary or unlawful to baptize them.

For,

(1) Baptism may be administered to those, who are capable of some of the ends of it, though they are not of all.

It is true, one great end of Baptism is to be a sign of the washing away of sin, and cleansing the soul; and why may not this be God's sign towards infants, though it cannot be theirs towards him?

Certainly, the sacraments are instituted to be the signs of God's favor to his children, as well as pledges of their service to him. Again, we find that our Lord Jesus Christ himself was baptized by John, whose baptism was the baptism of repentance; and yet our Saviour had no sin to be repented of, no filth to be washed away. By which instance alone, it is sufficiently clear, that an incapacity for some ends of an ordinance, where there is a capacity for others, doth not exclude from a right of partaking of it.

(2) Another great end of the institution of Baptism was, to be God's seal to the covenant of his grace.

Now, as a man may seal a deed of gift to an infant, which shall be valid, though he understand it not: so God may and doth seal the promises of his covenant to infants; and yet their incapacity of knowing it doth not make the truth and promise of God of none effect.

(3) Though infants cannot perceive the significancy of Baptism, yet this can be no reason to exclude them from it.

For, I suppose it will be granted, that circumcision was significant, being a sacrament as well as Baptism. And yet we read and know, that circumcision was instituted for infants, who were altogether as incapable of understanding the nature and end of that ordinance, as our children are of Baptism. If, therefore, circumcision were not an idle, insignificant ceremony to the Jewish children, which it is blasphemy to assert; no more is Baptism to the children of Christians, though they cannot understandingly reflect upon the significancy of it.

(4) Though, at present, infants cannot understand the significancy of Baptism, yet this sign may be effectual and operative when they are grown up to the use of reason; and they may then be taught, as it is the duty of all parents to instruct their children, what an early covenant God entered into with them, and they with God.

Certainly, it is of some avail to have a child's name put into a lease or deed of gift, though for the present he understand not the use of it: it may afterwards be of as much value to him, as all his estate and livelihood is worth. The covenant of grace is a deed of gift made to us by Christ, wherein he promiseth to bestow upon us eternal life and happiness. Now, as it would be absurd to say, that a child's name ought not to be put into any legacy or deed, till he come of age to understand it: so, alike absurd and far more injurious is it, to leave out our children from this heavenly legacy, that Christ hath left to his Church; which, though for the present they do not understand it, yet may be of infinite use to them afterwards

when they are grown up to years of discretion, and they may strongly plead it with God with good success.

2. Another main objection against Infant Baptism is, that "*Neither Christ nor his Apostles, have anywhere commanded Infants to be baptized.* Now it might seem strange, that a matter of such consequence should be omitted in the Scripture, if it were a necessary duty."

To this I answer,

(1) The Scripture commands whatsoever may be deduced from it by good and necessary consequence.

Now it is plain in Scripture, that infants are disciples: again, it is plain in Scripture, that disciples ought to be baptized. It is plain in Scripture, that infants are members of the Church: again, it is plain in Scripture, that the members of the Church ought to be solemnly admitted into it by Baptism. And this is plain scripture-proof, supposing that the Scriptures were written for men who have reason to deduce consequences from premises; for it is a known and a certain rule, That whatsoever is drawn from Scripture by true and solid reason, is Scripture.

(2) That it lies upon them to show, where Christ hath excluded infants; not upon us to show, where they are expressly admitted.

The reason of it is, because it is clear, that infants were once admitted to be members of the visible Church by circumcision. Now if Christ hath repealed such a privilege as this, let them first produce this repealing act; which they can never do: and, next, let them show what greater and better privilege Christ hath bestowed on infants instead of it, or else they will make him to be *Durus Deus Infantum;* and that our children, under the Gospel, are in a far worse estate than the Jews' children under the law.

(3) It is certain, that the Apostles knew nothing of the repeal of this privilege.

They could not think that Christ had excluded infants from being any longer of his Church, when they thought themselves bound to observe the Jewish customs, and to continue all the observances of the Jewish Church; yea, and that after they had baptized many thousands of people.

(4) We find that those of the Jews, who believed on Christ, were yet very much offended at the neglect of circumcision.

This is clear from that speech of the Jewish Christians to St. Paul, Acts xxi. 20, 21. They said unto him, "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: And they are informed of thee, that

thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying, That they ought not to circumcise their children." To remove which prejudice he himself observed the rites of purification, prescribed by the law of Moses; and, upon the same misprision, had before circumcised Timothy, as we find it, Acts xvi. 3. So that, certainly, St. Paul thought not any privileges of the Jewish Church to be repealed by their becoming Christians; but that they might, according to the law of Moses, circumcise their infants, as being members of the Church: and, therefore they ought to baptize them; this being as much required by the gospel, as the other was by the law.

These things, therefore, being well considered, we may see reason and authority enough to continue our practice of baptizing infants; unless they can bring some place of Scripture, that doth exclude them from this ordinance.

3. But then, again, they object, that such a place they can and do produce: and that is, Mat. xxviii. 19, where our Saviour gives commission to his disciples, to go and *teach all nations, baptizing them.* Here it is clearly expressed, that *they are first to be taught, before they are baptized; and, consequently, Infants, who are incapable of being taught, are thereby rendered incapable of being baptized.*

For answer to this, you must consider,

(1) That there is a vast difference between a Church in its first institution, and a Church in its progress and continuation.

The Apostles, who received this commission immediately from the mouth of Christ himself, were sent to frame a Church out of the heathen world, who had never known the true God, nor heard of the name of Christ Jesus, and therefore were to be instructed in his doctrine before they could be baptized in his name: it had been a strange and preposterous course, if men, grown up to years and the use of reason, should be baptized into the profession of Christ, before ever they had heard who this Christ was, and what was that belief into which they were baptized: but, when once they were thus taught and baptized, it is more than barely conjectural, that their infants were made partakers of the same ordinance; from this, that some whole families are said to have been baptized: wherein they must be unreasonably bold, who will deny there were any infants; or children, as incapable to receive the knowledge of so high a mystery, as infants are. But we are not to lay the foundations of a new Church, but to build upon the old: indeed, were we to convert an infidel, reason and religion would show, that we should instruct him before we baptize him: but the children of

believing parents are members of the Church of Christ by their birth-right; and therefore have a right to Baptism, long before they have a capacity for instruction. So saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. vii. 14, that the children of a believing parent are holy: now to be holy, signifies to be separated unto God; and, certainly, if they be separated to God in their state and condition, they ought to be solemnly dedicated unto him in the ordinance of Baptism. For they are not unclean: i. e. they are not in the same state with the children of heathen and infidels: but they are holy, and therefore members of the Church (unless we would imagine a generation of holy persons without the Church;) and therefore are they capable of being baptized before they are capable of being instructed.

(2) If our Saviour had sent his disciples to convert the Gentiles to the law of Moses, what other words could he have used to them, but "Go teach all nations, circumcising them."

If therefore, such words would not imply, but that the infants of proselyted heathens ought to have been circumcised before they were taught and instructed in the law of Moses, no more do our Saviour's words imply, that the infants of believing Gentiles ought not to be baptized before they are instructed in the faith of Christ: for, if Christ had used such words, none would have imagined that the infants of proselyted Gentiles were to be excluded by them from circumcision; and, therefore, neither can there be any reason to imagine, from the words as they lie, that our Saviour did intend by them to exclude the infants of Christians from Baptism.

(3) We must consider what apprehensions the Apostles, to whom our Saviour spake, had concerning the Church-estate of infants in their time.

Did they not look upon them as members of the Church then? It is plain that they did, since they were all circumcised. And can we with reason think, that, when our Saviour bade them gather whole nations into his church, they should imagine that infants must now be excluded out of it by a new example, since they were all included in the Church under the dispensation which was in use among them? This is highly improbable. And therefore we have all reason to conclude, that, when our Saviour bade them teach and baptize, they understood no other, but that they were to bring the Gentiles into the same state of a Church in which the Jews were before, that they might enjoy the same privileges or greater: the adult to be taught and baptized, and the infants of these to become Church-members upon the faith and profession of their parents; just as it was before, in the case of proselytes. And this very

sense the word μαθητευετε doth well bear: for it signifies *to make disciples,* as well as *to teach;* and, as I have before proved, that children are disciples, so it is clear that our Saviour himself chose disciples before he had taught them; and, that scholars are admitted, not because they have learned, but that they may learn.

4. It may be again objected that *"Baptism is an engaging sign: but how can Infants covenant and engage with God?"*

To this I answer,

(1) That, certainly, our children are as much capacitated to enter into covenant with God, as were the children of the Jews; and, that Circumcision was as much an engaging seal of the covenant, as now Baptism is.

If, therefore, they condemn Infant Baptism, because infants cannot enter into covenant with God; they do but thereby pretend to be wiser than God: and tell him, that he may possibly be a loser by transacting with those, who perhaps hereafter may plead nonage, and that they could not be obliged by any thing transacted in their minority.

(2) It is true, that Baptism is an engaging sign between God and the baptized; whereby they enter into covenant with God, and he with them: but, though they cannot personally vow nor stipulate, yet they may have sponsors and sureties to undertake this for them.

For parents, and those who are appointed by parents, have certainly a right to bind and engage children in this Baptismal covenant. It is but a natural right which they have over them, to bind them to the terms of any covenant or agreement; especially such as shall be for their benefit and advantage. I showed you before, out of Deut. xxix. 10–13, that they were to enter their children into covenant as well as themselves. And, though it be the custom of our church for those who are not the parents to engage for the child, yet their stipulation is in this case valid and obligatory; because they are hereunto appointed by their parents, who have a natural right over their children, and make these their representatives.

But some will say, and it is commonly objected, but not more commonly than very ignorantly, that "These sureties promise more than they can perform. They promise, that the child presented to Baptism shall forsake the devil and all his works, and renounce the pomps and vanities of this world, and continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto its life's end. But this is not in their power to effect."

To this I answer: It is not they, that promise these things for themselves; neither indeed do they promise that the child shall do them; but it is the child, that promiseth these things by them. It is not their duty, by virtue of that promise; but his. Indeed, they ought to contribute their best help and assistance hereunto; and that is all that is incumbent on them: which, if they have done, and the child prove notoriously wicked, they have not thereby broken any covenant, but only he himself; for, in entering into those holy engagements, they bore the person of the infant, and their stipulation is legally his: so that they leave him obliged to perform what in his name is promised; which if he performs, eternal life will be his reward; if not, eternal death. They lay this engagement upon the child; as parents, and those deputed by parents, may do: leaving it to him to fulfil the covenant, or to transgress it at his own peril.

And thus, I hope, I have, to all sober and rational persons, made it sufficiently clear, that Infant Baptism is lawfully used in the Church of Christ: and that those things, which are objected against it, are but of small moment; being grounded either upon mistakes or falsehoods.

iii. Let us, therefore, proceed to the third general propounded, which was to show you THE VARIOUS ENDS AND USES OF BAPTISM.

Its use is threefold.

1. *It is a solemn way of entering into the fellowship of the Church.*

For whosoever are partakers of it are reckoned visible members of the Church; and have an interest in all the prayers of the saints, for their brethren on earth. And this ought, by every sober Christian, to be esteemed a great benefit; that his children, by their being baptized, are wrapped up in the prayers of all the saints throughout the world, and so daily presented to God, though to them unknown. Baptism is the solemn enrolling of our names in the register-book of the church visible; where we stand listed under Christ, *the Captain of* our *Salvation;* engaging ourselves to maintain a truceless war, against all the enemies of his glory and of our happiness.

2. Another use of this ordinance is, *to be a seal added by God, to confirm to us the fidelity of his covenant of grace;* that, as circumcision was a seal of the covenant to the Jews, so Baptism is to Christians.

For, in this holy institution, God gives us a visible sign and

pledge of the truth of his promise; that he will as certainly save us if we believe, as our bodies have been sprinkled with baptismal water.

3. Another use of it is, *to be a sign and a representation.*

And thus it represents divers things.

(1) The original filth and pollution of our natures: for washing doth denote defilement.

We all came into the world with foul and unclean natures; the sinks of all manner of filth and pollution. Parents convey a sad and necessary patrimony of original sin unto all their posterity: yea, though they themselves be sanctified and cleansed, yet their offspring is born with this native taint; as a circumcised father begat an uncircumcised son; and as pure grain sown in the earth produceth grain wrapped up in husks and chaff. And, therefore, as they should rejoice that God hath given them to see of the fruit of their bodies; so they should mourn to think, that they have brought into the world a creature despoiled of the image of God, and thereby woefully inclined to all manner of vice and wickedness; a child of wrath, and an heir of hell.

(2) It signifies to us the purifying and cleansing virtue of the blood of Christ, which is represented unto us by the baptismal water.

For, as that cleanseth the body; so, the sprinkling of "the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin:" 1 John i. 7, and purgeth "the conscience from dead works:" Heb. ix. 14.

(3) It signifies to us the nature of sanctifying and renewing grace; which, as water washes away bodily filth, so this doth the defilements, the vices, and evil habits of the soul.

And, therefore, sanctification is often set forth by the similitude of washing: Isaiah i. 16, 17; "Wash you, make you clean....cease to do evil; learn to do well:" and, Ezek. xxxvi. 25; "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness." And thus in many other places.

Now, though these significations cannot be of use for the present to the infant, because it wants the use of reason to reflect upon them; yet they may have very great influence hereafter, when he is grown up to more mature age: yea, and to us, who are present and spectators of this holy ordinance, the very sight of the sacramental action should lively suggest to our minds those spiritual things, that are signified thereby; how that we, who have been "baptized into Christ".....were "buried with him by baptism....that, like as Christ was raised up from death....so we also should walk in newness of life;" as the Apostle speaks, Rom. vi. 3, 4.

Let us not, therefore, entertain any slight thoughts of this great and holy ordinance. Indeed, it is too seldom that we seriously consider what an obliging covenant we have entered into in our Baptism: but, as if all the promises of forsaking the devil and his works, of renouncing the enticements of our own lusts, and the allurements of the world, were all written on the water that sprinkled us, and wiped off together with it, we have lived not only careless of, but even contrary to our baptismal vows and engagement. And, to conclude this, whensoever we attend this holy ordinance, the administration of this sacrament, we ought to renew our covenant with God; and again to give up ourselves unto him, with more unconquerable resolutions of being his, and wholly devoted to his service, than formerly. So that, though the seal be not applied to us, yet to us may be confirmed the benefits of the covenant by virtue of that seal, which in our infancy was applied to our body, and is now, by our faith, applied to our souls.

II. Having thus, at large, confirmed to you the lawfulness of Infant Baptism, and removed those prejudices and cavils that lay against it; I shall now return MORE NARROWLY TO CONSIDER THE TEXT: wherein we have, as I formerly told you, two propositions.

The one is, That the end of Christ's giving himself for the Church, was to *sanctify and cleanse it.*

And, secondly, That the means to sanctify and cleanse the Church, is by *the washing of water,* and *the word.*

It is the latter of these, which I shall insist on.

i. Wherein TWO THINGS only REQUIRE A BRIEF EXPLICATION.

What is meant by the washing of water.

What by the word.

1. As to the first, *washing of water* may be understood either literally or allusively.

If we take it literally, so it signifies Baptism; and the meaning is plainly, that we are sanctified and cleansed by Baptism.

If we take it allusively, so this washing of water denotes to us the manner of the Spirit's sanctifying and cleansing the soul: for, as water cleanseth the filth of the body, so doth the power of divine grace purify the soul from its vicious filth and pollutions.

But, certainly, the literal sense is here the best; nor ought we to depart from it, in any text of Scripture, without apparent reason and cogent necessity.

For here are two means of our sanctification mentioned, water and the word: and, to make both these effectual, the inward influence of the Holy Ghost must concur, without which they will never attain their end.

2. By *the word*, may be understood two things.

(1) Either the very words used in the form of baptizing, and prescribed by our Saviour, Mat. xxviii. 19, where he commands his Apostles to baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

So that, according to this, the meaning of the Apostle is, that the washing of Baptism, joined with the words of institution, is the means appointed by Christ for the sanctifying and cleansing of his Church. And, indeed, towards infants there is no other means appointed; nor are they capable of any other ordinance. Or,

(2) By the word here is meant, the preaching of the whole word and will of God.

And this I judge most probable: for so the sense runs plain, that the two great means, which Christ hath appointed for the sanctifying of his Church, are the administration of the Sacrament and the preaching of the Gospel.

Concerning the influence that the word hath in our sanctification, I shall not now speak. It is the seed, by which we are begotten: 1 Pet. i. 23; "Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God." It is the milk by which we are nourished: 1 Pet. ii. 2; "Desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." It is the principle of our spiritual being, and it is the spiritual food of our souls; an effectual instrument in the hand of the Holy Ghost, both to beget and to increase grace in us: and therefore our Saviour prays, John xvii. 17; "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

ii. But the subject, which I now intend to prosecute, is concerning Baptism; and that this ordinance is APPOINTED BY CHRIST FOR OUR SANCTIFICATION.

And here observe, that, to be sanctified, imports, in the proper signification of it, no other than to be appointed, separated, or dedicated to God. And, therefore, in Scripture, whatsoever is set apart for the use and service of God, whether persons, or places, or things, is said to be holy, or to be sanctified to the Lord. So, the first-born are said to be sanctified to the Lord: Exod. xiii. 2; and Aaron and his sons, to be consecrated and sanctified to minister under the Lord: Exod. xxviii. 41. And so, for places, Moses was commanded to

sanctify the mountain Sinai, that is, to make it holy, by setting it apart only for God's appearance on it, and that the people might not come near to touch it: Exod. xix. 23: thus, the tabernacle, and afterwards the temple, are said to be sanctified: Numb. vii. 1; for, being set apart only for the worship and service of God, they were thereby made relatively holy: so we read, that the ground, on which Moses stood, is, by God himself, called *holy:* Exod. iii. 5: and Mount Tabor, on which our Saviour was gloriously transfigured, is, by the Apostle, called *the holy mount:* 2 Pet. i. 18; because of the special appearance of God in those places, which did then hallow and consecrate them. And then, as for things, a man is said to *sanctify his house to be holy unto the Lord:* Levit. xxvii. 14, and to sanctify his field: v. 16, when the rent of the one and the profits of the other were devoted unto God, for the maintenance of his service and servants. And so, in innumerable other places, the word *sanctify* is thus used; and the import of it is no other, than to signify the dedication of a person, thing, place, or time unto God.

There are two ways of dedication unto God; whereby his title takes place, and what is so devoted becomes his.

The one external, by men; as in the instances before cited: whereby there was no change at all wrought in the nature of the thing thus dedicated, but only a change in the relation and propriety of it. As in a field devoted to God, there was no other change, but only in relation to the owner; God himself becoming the proprietor, and receiving the increase of it by his immediate servants and ministers. And thus the piety of our ancestors hath sanctified the tenth part of the increase of the land unto God, for the maintenance of his worship.

The other dedication is internal, and wrought by God himself. And thus he is said to separate or dedicate persons to himself, when, by the effectual operation of the Holy Ghost upon them, he endows them with those habits, which enable them to do him service.

Not to heap up many places, we have both of these, Acts xiii. 2; "Separate unto me Barnabas and Saul, for the work, whereunto I have called them." Here is their external separation: they were to be dedicated, to be sanctified, or made holy persons by the Church: *Separate* unto *me:* that is, set these men apart, and appoint them by a solemn mission for my work and service in the ministry. Here is, likewise, their internal dedication; whereby God had set them apart for himself, by the gifts and graces of his Spirit wrought in them: "Separate them to the work whereunto I have called them:"

*i. e.* whereunto I have inwardly both inclined, and fitted, and furnished them.

As there is this twofold dedication or separation, so there is also a twofold sanctification.

There is an external, relative, or ecclesiastical sanctification; which is nothing else, but the devoting or giving up of a thing or person unto God, by those who have a power so to do.

There is an internal, real, and spiritual sanctification: and, in this sense, a man is said to be sanctified, when the Holy Ghost doth infuse into his soul the habits of divine grace, and maketh him partaker of the divine nature, whereby he is inwardly qualified to glorify God in a holy life.

I suppose by this, which hath been said, the meanest capacity may well apprehend the difference between these two kinds of sanctification, or separation unto God.

iii. In applying this distinction to Baptism, and to show you how it is that Baptism doth sanctify, I shall lay down these following PROPOSITIONS.

1. *Baptism is the immediate means of our external and relative sanctification unto God.*

By this Holy Sacrament, all that are partakers of it are dedicated and separated unto him.

There are, if I may so express it, but two regiments of men: the one is of the world; the other is of the Church. And, in one of these, all mankind are listed, and do march. The great captain and commander of the world is the devil; who is therefore called the prince and the god of this world: but the great captain of the Church is the Lord Jesus Christ; called therefore *the Captain of our Salvation*, Heb. ii. 10. So that all, who belong not unto the Church of Christ, are of the world, and march under Satan's ensign and banner: and all, who are not of the world, but are taken out of it, belong unto the Church, and are listed under Jesus Christ as his soldiers and servants.

This Church of Christ may be considered, either as visible or invisible. The visible Church of Christ on earth, is a sort of people who profess the name of Christ, and own his doctrine; joining together in a holy society and communion of worship, where it can be enjoyed. The invisible Church of Christ on earth, is a number of true believers, who have internal and invisible communion with Jesus Christ, by their faith and his Spirit. The visible Church is of a much larger extent than the invisible: for it comprehends

hypocrites, and too many ungodly persons; yea, all those, who have given up their names unto Christ, and make a visible profession of his doctrine, though by their lives and practices they deny it. And, therefore, the Church, which is frequently in Scripture called *the kingdom of heaven,* is compared *to a net, cast into the sea,* gathering *of every kind* of fish, both good and bad: Mat. xiii. 47; both sorts are embraced in the bosom of this net; and no separation can ordinarily be made, until it be drawn ashore at the day of judgment: and then the good shall be gathered into vessels, and the bad cast away; as it is there expressed. Again, the visible Church is compared to a *floor,* wherein there is both *chaff* and *wheat:* Luke iii. 17; and these will be mixed together, till the last determinating and fanning day; and then shall the wheat be gathered into the garner, and the chaff burnt up with unquenchable fire.

The world out of which this Church of Christ is taken, is the whole company of those persons, who belong unto the devil, the god of this world.

And this *Ecclesia Malignantium,* this Satanical church, may likewise be either visible or invisible, as the Church of Christ is. That, which is visibly such, are all such, who make no profession of the name of Christ, nor own his doctrine and religion, without which there is no salvation attainable: so that they do visibly belong to the church and kingdom of Satan, who are either trained up in heathenish idolatry, Mahometan stupidity, or Jewish obstinacy; or else those, who revolt from the Christian profession to embrace any of these. Those, who are of the world, but yet more invisibly, are all such persons, who, though they make a profession of the name and doctrine of Christ, yet, through hypocrisy or other sins, reject that Christ, whom they profess; denying him in their works, whom they own in their words; maintaining no vital nor spiritual communion with him.

From this distinction it follows,

(1) That all, that are of the visible Church of Christ Jesus, are taken out of the world; so that it may truly be said of them, that they are not of the world.

I cannot indeed deny, but that too many, yea, possibly the major part of the church visible of Jesus Christ, may still appertain invisibly to the kingdom of the devil, which is the world: and if any of those, who profess the name of Christ, fall into any public and notorious sin, they ought to be cut off by the censure of excommunication; and, till they give satisfaction by repentance, are to be reputed as heathens and publicans; but yet this is cer-

tain, that, till sentence pass upon them, they are to be looked upon as members of the visible Church, and not visibly of the world. Yea, farther, excommunication itself doth not absolutely and simply cut men off from being members of the Church of Christ: for they, who are under an ordinance of the Church for their edification, are certainly still members of the Church: but, as those, who are outlawed, are debarred of the benefits and privileges of the state in which they live, and of which they are subjects; so, excommunication, being a spiritual outlawry, deprives persons who lie under it of the privileges of the Church, and renders them as incapable of the visible communion of Christians as if they did visibly appertain to the malignant church and the kingdom of Satan.

(2) Hence it follows, that all those, who are members of the visible Church, may truly be called saints, and members of Christ, and the children and people of God: because, by being taken into the Church, they are taken out of the world; and so become God's portion, and the lot of his inheritance.

Deut. xxxii. 9; "The Lord's portion is his people: Jacob is the lot of his inheritance." Not that they are all so in an internal, spiritual, and saving manner: would to God they were! and that all that are of Israel were Israel! as the Apostle speaks, Rom. ix. 6; but only, because, though many of them are hypocrites, and many more profane; yet they may bear these titles from the external relation wherein they now stand to Christ, by making profession of his name and religion.

I look upon the Christian Church, now under the times of the gospel, to be in the same capacity, and to stand in the same relation towards God, as the Jewish Church did under the law. But, clear it is, that, in the most corrupt state of the Jewish Church, God still owned them for his people: Jer. iv. 22; "My people is foolish: they have not known me:" and Isaiah i. 3, 4: "My people doth not consider. Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquities, a seed of evil-doers!" Notwithstanding these great complaints of their universal wickedness, as you find throughout that whole chapter, yet are they God's people. "My people;" and yet "a people laden with iniquity;" "My children;" and yet "a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters!"

Yea, and in the New Testament we find sanctification and holiness ascribed to those, who were never otherwise sanctified, than by their external separation from the world, and profession of the doctrine of Christ. St. Paul directs his epistle to the whole

Church of Corinth, as to saints: "To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called to be saints:" 1 Cor. i. 2; and it was the common beginning of all his epistles. Yet were there some in this Church of Corinth, that had not the knowledge of God, that denied the resurrection, and were grossly guilty of foul and flagitious crimes; as he himself witnesseth against them, and for which he sharply reproves them in that epistle: saints they are called, only because they were visible Church-members, and made a profession of the Christian faith and name. Neither is it easy to be conceived, that all those saints, whose bowels Philemon refreshed, whose feet the widows or deaconesses washed, who had share of the collections and contributions of the Church, were such as were internally united unto Christ by a saving faith: or, that, when Saul persecuted the Church and shut up the saints in prison, his rage and madness looked no further how to find them out, than merely by the profession of the name of Jesus; for, surely, he had not then the gift of discerning between sincere and rotten professors: Acts xxvi. 10; "Many of the saints did I shut up in prison:" and who they were is clear: Acts ix. 2; all that were *of* that *way;* that is, who professed the name of Christ Jesus. Some are said to be redeemed, who yet certainly were never better than ecclesiastical saints: for, after, it is spoken of them, that they denied "the Lord who bought them:" 2 Pet. ii. i. And some are said to be sanctified, who yet are supposed to sin unpardonably: Heb. x. 29; accounting "the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing." These places do irrefragably prove, that, in Scripture language, those are called saints, and sanctified, who were members of the Church of Christ, and thereby federally or relatively holy.

Again, they are called "the children of God," and "the sons of God." So, Gen. vi. 2; "The sons of God saw the daughters of men:" that is, they, who were of the Church, and made profession of the true service and worship of God, saw the daughters of those who were of the world, profane and wicked idolaters, by marrying of whom they were also perverted and drawn from the true worship of God. So, Deut. xiv. 1, it is spoken to the Israelites in general, "Ye are the children of the Lord your God:" and, yet, "with many of them," saith the Apostle, "God was not well pleased," but slew them "in the wilderness:" there were among them murmurers, schismatics, and rebels; and they were a hard-hearted and a stiff-necked people, under all the miraculous dispensations of God towards them; as their guide and governor, Moses,

often complains. And the Apostle St. Paul, alluding to this place of Deuteronomy, tells the Galatians, chap. iii. 26; "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus:" and yet the heresy of holding the necessity of Judaical observations woefully prevailed among them, so that they were generally infected, nay, bewitched with it; and yet an external profession of the name and doctrine of Christ, is, in the Apostle's judgment, sufficient to give them all the honorable style of *the children of God.* So, again, Rom. ix. 4, the Apostle tells us, that to the Israelites, as they were a Church, pertained *the adoption:* now adoption is making men sons of God: yet, certainly, they did not all of them enjoy the heavenly and effectual adoption, which would bring them all to the heavenly and glorious inheritance; but only they were the children of God, being separated from the world, and brought under an ecclesiastical economy, and dispensation of holy ordinances.

Again, to be members of the Church visible, is sufficient to style men, members of Christ. So our Saviour himself speaks of some branches in him, that bear not fruit: John xv. 2; and so, Rom. xi. 17, the branches of the true olive are said to have been broken off, and others engrafted in their stead. Certainly, this vine, and this olive, is Christ; and these barren, and therefore broken branches, are members of his body: not, indeed, living members united unto him by the band of a saving faith, whereby they might draw sap and nourishment from him, for such shall never be broken off, nor burnt; but yet they are in Christ, and belong unto Christ, as his mmbers by an ecclesiastical or political incision, as they are parts and members of the visible Church.

And thus, I suppose, I have made it sufficiently clear unto you, that all, who are taken out of the world into the visible Church of Christ, may, according to the phrase and expressions of Scripture, be called saints, the children and people of God, and members of Christ.

(3) But, to bring this home to our present subject of Baptism: from all this it evidently follows, that those, who are baptized, may, in this ecclesiastical and relative sense, be truly called saints, the children of God, and members of Christ; and, thereupon, inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.

Doubtless, so far forth Baptism is a means of sanctification, as it is the solemn admission of persons into the visible Church; as it separates them from the world, and from all false religions in it, and brings them out of the visible kingdom of the devil into the visi-

ble kingdom of Jesus Christ. For, if all, that are admitted into the visible Church, are thereby, as I have proved to you, dignified with the title of saints and the children of God; then, by Baptism, which is the solemn way of admitting them into the Church, they may, with very good reason, be said to be made saints, the children of God, and members of Christ. But this is only a relative sanctity, not a real: and many such saints and sanctified men there are, who shall never enter into heaven; but, by their wicked lives, forfeit and lose that blessed inheritance to which they were called. Many there are, who are saints, by their separation from Paganism and Judaism into fellowship with the visible Church; but they are not saints, by their separation from wicked and ungodly men into a spiritual fellowship with Christ. And yet, to such saints as these, all the ordinances of the Church are due, till, for their notorious wickedness, they be cut off from that body, by the due execution of the sentence of excommunication. Such a Baptismal regeneration as this is must needs be acknowledged by all, that will not wilfully shut their eyes against the clear evidence of Scripture; from which I have before brought plentiful proofs to confirm it. Yet let me add once more; and that shall be Gal. iii. 26, 27. "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus:" *i. e.* believing and professing his doctrine: "For as many of you," saith the Apostle, "as have been baptized into Christ;" *i. e.* baptized into the religion of Christ, and in his name, "have put on Christ," *i. e.* have professed him, and thereby put upon yourselves his name, being called Christians: and this putting on of Christ in Baptism, the Apostle makes a ground to assert them to be all "the children of God." But still it must be remembered, that this sanctification, regeneration, and adoption, conferred upon us at our admission into the visible Church, is external and ecclesiastical: and, though it alone will suffice to the salvation of infants, because they are thereby as holy as their state can make them capable of; yet it will not suffice to the salvation of grown and adult persons, if they contradict it by the course of a wicked life: for our Saviour hath told us, "that the children of the kingdom shall," themselves, many of them, "be cast into outer darkness:" Mat. viii. 12.

And thus much for the first position, that Baptism is a means of our external and relative sanctification unto God; because, by it, we are separated from the visible kingdom of the devil, and brought into the visible kingdom of Christ, and are devoted by vow and covenant unto the service of God.

2. Another position is this, That *Baptism is not so the means of an internal and real sanctification, as if all, to whom it is administered, were thereby spiritually renewed, and made partakers of the Holy Ghost in his saving graces.*

Though an external and ecclesiastical sanctification be effected by Baptism, *ex opere operato*, by the mere administration of that Holy Sacrament; yet so is not an internal and habitual sanctification: and that, whether we respect adult persons or infants.

(1) For adult persons, we have a famous and incontrollable instance, in the Baptism of Simon Magus, who *believed* upon the preaching of the gospel: (for so it is said, Acts viii. 13,) and, upon the profession of faith in Jesus Christ, was admitted to the holy ordinance of Baptism. Yet, v. 23, St. Peter tells him, that he was "still in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity:" in the same state of sin and misery, and as much a blackamoor when he came out of the laver, as he was before he entered into it. And,

(2) For infants, it is not easy to be conceived, what inward work can, in an ordinary manner, pass upon them.

And, to feign an extraordinary and miraculous work there is no necessity, since their salvation may be safe without it. What the miraculous grace of God is able to do, is not fit to be disputed. But, surely, we have very little reason to think that there are any real habits of supernatural grace infused into the souls of infants, since neither are they ordinarily capable of it, nor of exerting any spiritual acts by it. However, Baptism was not instituted to any such purpose, that it should be an instrument of working a real change upon infants: for neither can it work this change by any immediate and proper efficiency, since the washing of the body cannot thus affect the soul, nor infuse any gracious habits into it which itself hath not; neither can it work morally, by way of suasion and argument, because infants have not the use of reason to apprehend any such. Again, if this Baptismal regeneration be real, by the infusion of habitual grace, how comes it to pass that the greater part of those, who have received it, lead profane and unholy lives, and too, too many perish in their sins? They, who have the seed of God in them shall never sin unto death; and the perseverance of those, who are inwardly and effectually sanctified, is safe and certain: for, surely, true grace is saving, and true and saving grace is the effect of our election unto eternal life; for "whom he did predestinate, them he also called:" Rom. viii. 30. And, therefore, I judge it unsound doctrine, to affirm, that Baptism

doth confer real sanctification upon all infants, as well as upon some adult persons, who are made partakers of it.

But here may some say, "If Baptism doth not confer a real and internal regeneration on infants, who partake thereof, how then is it, that the Church hath appointed a prayer in the office of Baptism, wherein we bless God, that it hath pleased him to regenerate the baptized infant with his Holy Spirit?"

To this I answer, that the Baptismal regeneration of infants is external and ecclesiastical. They are regenerated, as they are incorporated into the Church of Christ: for this is called *Regeneration*, Mat. xix. 28. "Ye, which have followed me in the regeneration.....shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel:" where, though some read the words otherwise, "in the regeneration ye shall sit upon twelve thrones," meaning thereby the day of judgment and the last renewing of all things; yet I see no enforcing necessity to alter the common and usual reading, "Ye, which have followed me in the regeneration," *i. e.* in planting my Church, which is the renewing of the world. And, therefore, the Apostle, 2 Cor. v. 17, saying, "that old things are passed away....all things are become new," is thought to allude unto the Prophet Isaiah lxv. 17, "Behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered." And this state of the Gospel was, by the Jews, frequently called "The world to come:" and so likewise it is called by the Apostle, Heb. ii. 5, "Unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak." To be admitted, therefore, by Baptism into the Church of Christ, is, to be admitted into the state of regeneration, or the renewing of all things, called therefore "the washing of regeneration:" Tit. iii. 5.

"But how then are infants said, in Baptism, to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit, if he doth not inwardly sanctify them in and by that ordinance?"

I answer: Because the whole economy and dispensation of the kingdom of Christ is managed by the Spirit of Christ: so that those who are internally sanctified, are regenerated by his effectual operation: and those, who are only externally sanctified, are regenerated by his public institution. Infants, therefore, are in Baptism regenerated by the Holy Ghost, because the Holy Spirit of God appoints this ordinance to receive them into the visible Church, which is the regenerate part and state of the world.

That is the second position, That Baptism is not so the means of sanctification, that all, to whom it is administered, must thereby be made partakers of the Holy Ghost in his saving graces.

3. *It is not so the means of sanctification, as if none could be internally and really sanctified, who are necessarily deprived of that holy ordinance.*

Yea, indeed, all, that are converted from other religions unto Christianity, must first believe and make profession of that faith, before they can be admitted unto the sacrament of Baptism: and doubtless, many thousands were by the apostles converted, not only to the Christian profession, but to a Christian and holy life, before they were baptized.

We well know, that, in the primitive times, very many did delay their Baptism till their declining age, out of an erroneous opinion, that all voluntary sins after Baptism were unpardonable; and yet it would be very uncharitable to judge, that none of these were sanctified and inwardly renewed by the Holy Ghost.

Yea, and, perhaps, to beat down this misgrounded practice, some, on the other hand, held, that Baptism was of absolute and indispensable necessity to eternal life: which was to cure a mistake in practice, by a most grievous mistake in doctrine. Yet this their opinion they grounded on John iii. 5, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven:" whence they inferred, that Baptism was as absolutely necessary to eternal life, as the renovation of the soul by divine grace; so that they passed a peremptory doom of exclusion from the kingdom of heaven upon all, both infants and adult, that died without the seal of this institution, although it were through no default of their own, but by insuperable necessity; only they excepted such as died martyrs, whose Baptism, by their own blood, they thought might serve instead of Baptism by water. Thus, as St. Cyprian in one of his epistles relates, it was determined by an African council; to which determination he also gives his assent. And St. Austin (called, therefore, *Durus Pater infantum*,) seems, in many passages of his works to be thus rigid in giving sentence against all who died unbaptized; although probably, afterwards, the severity of his opinion relented: for in his fourth book against Donatus, he tells us, that not only suffering for the name of Christ may supply the want of Baptism, "Sed etiam fides conversióque cordis, si fortè ad celebrandum mysterium Baptismi in angustiis temporum succurri non potest:" "But faith also, and the conversion of the heart to God, if through unavoidable necessity we cannot celebrate the sacrament of Baptism." But whosoever were the authors or maintainers of this opinion, it is certainly unwarrantable, and uncharitable, and contrary to the judgment of the

higher primitive times: who, if they had thought that no person could possibly be sanctified or saved without Baptism, would certainly not have stinted the administration of it to their *Dies Baptismatum*, two special seasons of the year, Easter and Whitsunday; nor would many of them have deferred their own Baptism to the end of their days: for how could they be sure, that no casualty should, in the mean time, intervene; and cut off all opportunities of receiving it?

Baptism, then, is not of such absolute necessity as a means, that none can be saved without it: neither doth our Saviour in those words so assert it. For we must distinguish, between being inevitably deprived of the opportunity of Baptism, and a wilful contempt of it. And of this latter, must the words be understood. He, that contemns being born again of Baptism, and out of that contempt finally neglects it, shall never enter into the kingdom of God: but, for others, who are necessarily deprived of that ordinance, the want of it shall not in the least prejudice their salvation; for it is a stated rule, Non absentia, sed contemptus sacramentorum, reum facit.

4. The last Position is this, That *Baptism is an ordinary means appointed by Christ, for the real and effectual sanctification of his Church.*

For this is the great end of all gospel ordinances, that, through them, might be conveyed that grace, which might purify the heart and cleanse the life. And, though I do not affirm, that Baptism doth effect this in all to whom it is rightly applied: not in infants, who, while such, are incapable of that work; nor in many adult persons, who, though baptized, may remain still in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity: yet this I do affirm and maintain, that there is no reason to doubt the salvation of any, who, by this holy ordinance, are consecrated unto God, until, by their actual and wilful sinning, they thrust away from them those benefits, which God intends them by it. And, indeed, whoso doth but seriously consider the vows that are upon him, and the solemn engagements which he hath made to be the Lord's, will find a pressing force upon his soul, unless he be lost to all modesty and ingenuousness; urging him really to fulfil, what he hath so justly and so sacredly promised: no argument can be more prevalent to enforce a holy life, than when the Spirit of God shall bring home to our consideration the oath that we have taken, to be God's, and to oppose all the enemies that oppose his glory and our salvation; when we shall be reminded, that, so long as we continue in a state of sin, we live in perjury, having given our most serious promise to God, to yield

obedience to his will and laws, and to live as becomes his servants and soldiers.

I beseech you, therefore, O Christians! consider seriously with yourselves, what bonds and obligation lie upon you, that you have vowed and covenanted to be the Lord's: a vow, that is binding upon your souls; and which, if you do not fulfil it, will bind you over to everlasting condemnation. Sit down, and think with yourselves, to what you stand obliged; and either renounce your wicked life, or renounce your Baptism. Deal ingenuously: rescind the deed: and profess to all the world, that you look not upon yourselves as listed under Christ's banner, nor engaged to be his servants and soldiers; or, else, live as becomes Christians. What! shall your names be in the register of Christ, and yet your souls be in the hands of the devil? Will you carry his ensign in your forehead, and yet fight against him in his own camp? This is not only hostility, but treason: and, as rebels and traitors are more severely dealt with than enemies, so shall you be; and, believe it, the flames of hell burn the more furiously, for your being sprinkled with baptismal water.

iv. From all this, that hath been said on this subject, I shall draw this one deduction and so conclude. Hence WE MAY LEARN WHAT TO JUDGE, AND WHAT TO HOPE, CONCERNING THE STATE OF INFANTS, WHO DIE BAPTIZED.

Certainly, since they are in covenant with God; since they are the members of Christ, being members of his body, the Church; since they are sanctified and regenerated, so far forth as their natures are ordinarily capable of, without a miracle; we have all the reason in the world comfortably to conclude, that all such die in the Lord, and are forever happy and blessed with him.

With very good reason, therefore, and upon very clear evidence, hath our Church determined, that "it is certain, by God's word, that children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved:" Rubric after Baptism.

For what should hinder? Actual sins, they are supposed to have none: and the guilt of their original sin is pardoned to them, by virtue of God's covenant: wherein he becomes their God, and takes them for his own children. Baptism is the sealing of this pardon: Acts ii. 38; "Be baptized.....for the remission of sins:" and, certainly, the grant is made, where the seal is added: and, since they cannot forfeit it, either by hypocrisy or profaneness, without doubt they enjoy the everlasting benefits of it.

Yea, let me add, that not only infants baptized, but all infants of believing parents, though they should unavoidably die before Baptism, yea, before they see the light, are in the same safe and blessed condition, for they are in the same gracious covenant. For, since the promise is made to believers and to their children, God will not falsify his promise, where they break no conditions. Since the children of believing parents are holy, with all that holiness that their condition is capable of, this is sufficient to make them capable of heaven, into which no unclean thing can enter: therefore, if they be excluded, it is because they are unclean. which the Apostle expressly denies, 1 Cor. vii. 14. And lastly, since they are members of Jesus Christ, being members of his Church, he will certainly be the Saviour of his body, and present his Church holy and unspotted to his Father. And, since they cannot, either by hypocrisy or any other sin, debar themselves from the privileges of God's children, they shall certainly enjoy them in their largest and utmost extent.

We may therefore well comfort ourselves for the death of such: for there is far more ground to be assured of their salvation, than of any other persons in the world: because there can be no danger of hypocrisy, nor close dissimulation; which might make our charity, or their souls, miscarry.

Upon this account, David comforts himself for the death of his spurious child: 2 Sam. xii. 23; "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." Did David only mean, that he should go to the grave to him, there were as little comfort in that, as there are sense and enjoyment in death. But the consolation was, that he should go to that state of bliss and happiness, where the soul of this infant was made perfect: and that it was so, he could have no other assurance, but that his child was born within the pale of the Church; born in the covenant, and had the seal of the covenant applied to him.

The like consolation may we have, whenever God takes from us any of our infant children, that they, dying in the bosom of the Church, in covenant with God, and consecrated to him by Baptism, are received to that heavenly felicity, by virtue of God's promise and covenant, to which we ought to aspire, by a continued course of faith, patience, and obedience.

Tertullian calls "Fidelium filios, sanctitatis candidatos; et sanctos, tam ex seminis prærogativâ." Lib de Animâ.

## THE LORD'S SUPPER; OR, THE HOLY COMMUNION OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST.

*Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day: for my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.* JOHN vi. 54, 55.

1. These words are altogether metaphysical and figurative. And to OPEN them, I shall inquire,

What is meant by the flesh and blood of Christ.

What is meant by a Christian's eating and drinking this flesh and this blood.

For neither of these expressions must be taken according to its proper and literal signification.

As to the first: by the flesh and blood of Christ, we must not only understand his natural body, consisting of true flesh and blood: but the phrase includes whole Christ, as the Mediator of believers; especially in the course of his humiliation, to which he was subject by reason of that flesh and blood of ours which he took unto him; that so he might, in all things, be like unto us, sin only excepted. So that Christ, as our surety and Mediator, is this flesh and blood, which he here speaks of.

And, that it is to be taken in this latitude, will appear from explaining the second phrase, What it is, to eat this flesh, and drink this blood. And, here,

First. It is impiously gross to conceive, as the Papists do, that the words are to be expounded, of a carnally real eating of the natural body, and a proper real drinking of the blood of Christ, in their eucharist; which, besides all the gross contradictions and huge impossibilities that they are forced to swallow down with it, is a creed fitter for cannibals, than for Christians.

Secondly. Therefore there is a real eating of the flesh of Christ, and a real drinking of his blood, by faith. And of this, we must understand this place. Thus our Saviour expounds himself, v. 35, of this chapter: "I am the bread of life: he, that cometh to me, shall never hunger; and he, that believeth on me, shall never thirst." As hunger is satisfied by eating, and thirst allayed by drinking; so here, it is coming unto Christ, this "bread of life," that satisfies a Christian's hunger; and believing on Christ, "the fountain of living waters," that allays his thirst. This eating, therefore, the flesh of Christ, and drinking his blood, being by Christ himself made one and the same with our coming unto him, and that being

one and the same with our believing on him, it can be nothing else but an act of faith terminated upon Christ.

This body and blood of Christ, which we must thus eat and drink, *i. e.* which we must believe in, is not to be confined only to the true natural body of Christ; but to be extended to whatsoever he did and suffered in his body, as our Mediator, for our redemption and salvation. So, then, his being made a curse for us; his being made under the law, in the form of a servant, subjected to human infirmities and exposed to human miseries; his conflicting and wrestling with the wrath of God; his stripes and scourgings; his mockings and revilings; the obedience of his life, and his obedience unto death, even the shameful and accursed death of the cross; his bearing of our sins in his body on the tree; and his eluctating the whole load of wrath, that the justice and power of God could lay upon him, declared to the world by his triumphant resurrection: briefly, whatsoever in Christ tended to the satisfaction of divine justice and the salvation of our souls, that is this flesh and blood of Christ, which a believer's faith should feed upon.

It followeth: "He, that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood:" *i. e.* he, that believeth on me as Mediator, "hath eternal life."

This may be understood,

First. That grace, being an incorruptible, immortal seed, he, that hath this life of grace, hath, in this sense, an eternal life; a life, that shall never fade, nor die.

Secondly. If this eternal life be taken for the life of glory, as indeed it seems most congruous, then a believer is said to have this life, both because he hath the seeds and principles, the dawn and beginning of it here; and because God hath assured to him the possession of it hereafter, by his immutable word of promise: which is as good security as actual possession, and gives him a right and title to that blessed and glorious inheritance; and, certainly, what we have a right unto, we may well call ours. Hence we may observe, that, Mark xvi. 16, it is said, "He, that believeth ....shall be saved;" there is assurance of salvation for the future: but John iii. 18; "He, that believeth not, is condemned already." Unbelievers are no more actually condemned, than believers are actually saved; but, only, what God threatens or promises, it is all one, whether he saith it is done or it shall be done: for damnation is as certain to the one, and salvation to the other, as if they were already in their final state.

It followeth: "And I will raise him up at the last day." Now here the whole cry of the schoolmen, taking advantage from some

expressions that dropped unwarily from some of the Fathers, do from this place assert, that there is left a seminal virtue from the partaking of the eucharist, or Lord's Supper (for concerning that only most of them interpret these words of our Saviour), which hath a power to quicken, and raise the dead body at the last day. But this is so wild and absurd a conceit, as needs no confuting: especially, since the words are not to be understood primarily and principally of the Sacrament; but of faith in the merits of Christ, wrought out for us in his body, and by the shedding of his blood. Therefore, "I will raise him up at the last day," only declares to us Christ's promise and engagement, that he will be the author and efficient cause of our resurrection. And, though all men shall rise again, as well unbelievers as believers; yet Christ raiseth them in a different manner: those, who are unbelievers, he raiseth by his power, as he is the Lord of all things, both in heaven and earth; and, as their judge, he sends for these malefactors out of the prisons of their graves, to appear before his tribunal: but he raiseth believers, as their head; and, as they are parts of his mystical body, unto a glorious and blessed immortality. So that, though Christ's miraculous resurrection, was within three days after his death, yet his mystical resurrection shall not be till the end of the world; for, when all the saints of all ages of the world shall together rise out of their graves, then riseth Christ's mystical body.

It followeth, verse 55, "For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." What is meant by the *flesh* and *blood* of Christ, you have already heard: and here, by *meat* and *drink*, is meant whatsoever the faith of a Christian pitcheth upon in the sufferings of Christ, which he underwent by reason of his *flesh* and *blood:* whatsoever in Christ may feed and nourish his soul, that is here called *meat* and *drink*.

But why is this particle *indeed* added? "*My flesh is meat* INDEED, &c." I answer: We must not be so gross as the Transubstantiatists are, to conceive that *indeed* is the same with carnally and properly: *My flesh is meat indeed;* that is, say they, it is properly meat, and so to be eaten, even in a corporeal manner in the Sacrament. For the text only calls it βρωσις αληθως, and ποσις αληθως, not ασιοδως or κυριως. It is meat and drink indeed; but it is not meat and drink essentially or properly. This *indeed* must be taken spiritually. It is meat indeed, and drink indeed; but still spiritual: neither the less truly so, for being spiritually so; for all tropical and transferent speeches, though they take away from the propriety, yet they do not take from the truth and reality of the expression.

Therefore, not to insist longer on the exposition, take a full view of the sense of the words, in this short paraphrase, wherein I will lay aside all that was figurative in them.

"Whosoever believeth on me as Mediator, God-man; bearing the whole weight of God's displeasure, and the whole burden of the sins of the world in my body; pouring out my blood for their remission, and by my death satisfying the justice of God; he hath an eternal life of grace, and the seed-plot of an eternal life of glory, faith giving the believer a present prospect of it, and, by the gracious promise of God, a firm right and title to it. And such an one, being mystically united unto me, and incorporated in me, I will certainly raise again, at the last day, to eternal bliss and joy: for the sufferings which I underwent by reason of that flesh and blood which I took upon me, are the food and nourishment of the soul; inasmuch as they are the right objects for a saving and justifying faith to pitch upon, and to terminate in."

This I take to be the genuine meaning of those metaphorical expressions.

The sum of all which, you may take contracted into this one Proposition: That CHRIST, REPRESENTED IN HIS MERITORIOUS OBEDIENCE AND SUFFERINGS, IS THE RIGHT AND PROPER OBJECT OF A SAVING AND JUSTIFYING FAITH.

II. And, in handling it, I shall not speak of our acting faith on Christ in general; but, according to my present design, shall confine myself to the ACTING FAITH UPON HIM. AS EXHIBITED IN HIS BODY AND BLOOD IN THAT GREAT GOSPEL-ORDINANCE OF HIS SUPPER; which is, in a very special manner, *meat indeed* and *drink indeed;* the food and nourishment of a believing soul.

And here we must premise, that all the use and benefit of a Sacrament is comprehended in these two things:

In its being a representation, as a sign.

In its being an obsignation, as a seal.

Now it is only faith, as fixed on Christ the Mediator, that makes this ordinance beneficial to us, either as to its signifying or as to its sealing office. To dream of any spiritual advantage that accrues to the soul merely from the *opus operatum*, "the work done," though faith signifies nothing, though faith seals nothing, is so far from truth, though eagerly defended by the Romanists, that the Apostle plainly tells us, such do but eat and drink damnation to themselves, who discern not the Lord's body.

i. It is FAITH, AS REPRESENTING THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST, THAT GIVES THIS SACRAMENT ITS SANCTIFYING USE AND OFFICE.

One grand end why Christ instituted this ordinance was, that it might be *signum rememorativum*, "a remembrancing sign:" Luke xxii. 19, "This do in remembrance of me." So 1 Cor. xi. 26, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come." But without faith, the administration of the Sacrament is no better than a dumb show, without any signification at all. It is faith, that, in this ordinance, acts over the whole tragedy of Christ's sufferings; and carries the soul through them all, in as lively representations, as if Christ were but now undergoing them.

We are, I know, ready to wish that we had lived in the time of Christ's abode here on earth; that we had been conversant with him, as his disciples were, to have seen both his miraculous actions, and his no less miraculous passion. Why, truly, the disciples' sight of these things hath no advantage at all above our faith. If we can but exercise faith in this great ordinance, these things will be really present to us. There we shall see Christ crucified before our eyes; yea, and crucified as truly and really to our faith, as ever he was to the sense of others. Our faith can carry us into the garden, and make us watch with him in his agony, and observe every drop of blood that the sense of his Father's wrath strained through him. Faith can carry us to the judgment-hall, to hear his whole trial and arraignment. Faith can lead us through the whole multitude and crowd of people to his cross; and, in this ordinance, we may see his body broken and his blood poured out, and hear him crying, "It is finished," the work of redemption is completed, and see him at last give up the ghost. And all this the faith of a Christian doth as lively represent, as if it were but now doing; and thereby it makes the Sacrament a sign, and gives it its significancy.

Briefly, then, to enforce this. Whenever we come to partake of this great and solemn ordinance, let us be sure to set faith at work, to represent unto us the whole sufferings of Jesus Christ. A strong faith can recall things that are long passed, and make them exist again: so that time devours nothing, but to an ignorant person or an unbeliever. And, truly, unless faith do thus recall the sufferings of Christ, not to our memories only, but to our hearts and affections, they will all appear to us but as a story of somewhat done long ago; and as a worn-out, antiquated thing. Consider: were there a sight to be represented, at which heaven,

and earth, and hell itself, should stand amazed; wherein God himself should suffer, not only in the form of a servant, but under the form of a malefactor: and the everlasting happiness of all mankind, from the creation of the world to the final dissolution of it, should be transacted; in which we might see the venom and poisonous malignity of the sins of the whole world wrung out into one bitter cup, and this cup put into the hands of the Son of God to drink off the very dregs of it; in which we might see the gates of hell broken to pieces, devils conquered, and all the powers of their dark kingdom triumphed over: I say were there such a sight as this, so dreadful and yet so glorious, to be represented to us, would we not all desire to be spectators of it? Why, all this is frequently represented to us in the Sacrament. There, we may see the Son of God slain, the blood of God poured out: we may see him, that takes away our transgressions, numbered himself among transgressors: we may see him hanging upon the soreness of his hands and feet; all our iniquities meeting upon him, and the eternity of divine vengeance and punishments contracted, in their full extremity, into a short space: we may see the wrath of God pacified, the justice of God satisfied, mankind redeemed, hell subdued, and devils cast into everlasting chains. All this is clearly to be seen in this ordinance, if we bring but faith to discern it; without which, indeed, all this will be no more to us, than a magnificent and exquisite scene is to a blind man. Indeed, the Apostle speaks of some, who did, in an ill sense, "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh:" Heb. vi. 6. But, certainly, in a good sense, the faith of every believer ought to crucify to himself the Son of God afresh; and so lively to represent to himself the whole course of his sufferings, that the spectators themselves could not have been better informed of them, nor more affected with them, by their senses, than he by his faith.

But, that in this we may not be deceived by the workings of a quick and lively fancy, and mistake them for the workings of a quick and lively faith, let us observe, that, when faith gives the soul a view of the sufferings of Christ, it will stir up due and proportionable affections.

1. It will excite *a holy and ingenuous mourning.*

Can you see the body of Christ broken, and his blood poured out, and not have your hearts broken and bleeding within you? All nature itself felt violent convulsions, when the God of Nature suffered: heaven put on its blacks in that miraculous eclipse: the bowels of the earth were rent with an earthquake: the silent

chambers of the grave disturbed, and forced to resign their inhabitants, as if the whole frame of the world suffered with the Maker of it. And shall not we be affected, whose sins caused this sad tragedy, and whose interest was so deeply concerned in it? We ourselves had a share in crucifying the Lord of Glory: and, what St. Peter said to the Jews, Acts ii. 23; "Ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain him," may be truly said of us: we have crucified and slain the Lord of life and glory. And should not this prick us to the very hearts, as it did them? What! that we should nail him to his cross; and throw that load of sin and sorrow upon him, which made him cry out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" How should this cause us to melt in a holy and kind mourning, and to fulfil the prediction of the Prophet, Zech. xii. 10; "They shall look upon me, whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one that mourneth for his only son; and shall be in bitterness....as one that is in bitterness for his first-born!" And where can we look upon a broken and a pierced Saviour more lively, than in that holy Sacrament, which he hath instituted to be a remembrance of his death and sufferings.

2. If faith, and not memory, not fancy only, represents to you the sufferings of Christ in this ordinance, it will stir up in you, as a holy mourning and sorrow for your sins, so *a holy anger and indignation against them.*

Look upon your Saviour with sorrow; and upon your sins with hatred, as those, that were his bloody murderers, and squeezed so much gall and wormwood into the bitter cup of his passion. And shall I find pleasure in that, in which Christ found so much anguish and horror? Shall I entertain, and lodge in my bosom, the bloody murderers of my God and Saviour? Shall I delight and sport myself with those sins, which caused unknown dolors to him; and must be, if not expiated by his blood, eternally repaid and revenged in mine own?

3. Faith, representing the sufferings of Christ in this sacrament, will stir up *a holy fear and reverential awe of God.*

When faith shows us, that the united force of all that wrath, which yet would have been insufferable though parcelled out among us to whom it was due, met all at once upon him, who was not only innocent but the Son of God himself, it will make the believing soul fear and tremble under the apprehensions of this strict and severe justice of God. How can he but think with himself, "Alas! what a just God have I to deal with! a God, who, rather

than sin shall go unpunished, will so dreadfully punish the very imputation of it, even in his own Son. And what if Christ had not stood in my stead, and undergone my punishment for me? should not all his wrath have fallen upon me? should not I have been swallowed up in eternal torments, and have lain under the vindictive justice of God forever? How can our souls but be surprised with fear and trembling at such reflections as these, which faith ought to suggest to them at their attendance upon this holy ordinance?

4. If faith represent the sufferings of Christ to us, it will mightily enkindle and inflame *our love unto him.*

How can the believing soul, when he is receiving the bread and wine, think that now he is taking that Christ, whose love was so great as to undergo no less than infinite wrath to satisfy the offended justice of God, and not dissolve into proportionable love towards Christ again? To think, that Christ should lay by his robes of glory, wrap his deity in dust and ashes, hide and eclipse himself in our flesh, and all this abasement only to put himself into a farther capacity of suffering for us; that he should be crucified for those, who crucified him; that he should die for love of those, who killed him, and suffer for those from whom he still suffers; if we have any, the least spark of gratitude and ingenuousness, it must needs constrain us, not only to admire the infinite riches of the love of Christ towards us, but to return reciprocal love unto him.

These four affections, faith will excite in us when we partake of this ordinance, as it is a sign and a representation to us of the sufferings of Christ. For, without these, merely to recall to our minds those great transactions may be but the act of memory, or the representation of fancy; no work of faith.

And thus I have endeavored to show you, what is the object, which our faith ought to apprehend and pitch upon in this holy institution. For, as faith is, in every ordinance, the great purveyor and steward of the soul, that lays in provision for the soul to feed upon; so especially in this. It is faith alone, that can find out any thing in material elements, that may be suited and accommodated to an immaterial soul. For there is a kind of holy chemistry in this grace, that can extract spirit out of visible and sensible objects. What is there in the bread, and in the wine, that can nourish the soul? The body is, indeed, upheld by such earthly supports; but these are too gross feeding for our spiritual part. It is, indeed,

said, that "man did eat angels' food;" Ps. lxxviii. 25, to set forth the excellency and delicacy of that provision of manna, that God made for his unthankful people in the wilderness; yea, but a true believer hath better and choicer food set before him on the Lord's table, than the food of angels themselves. To a carnal eye, they appear but mere contemptible bread and wine; but yet our entertainment there is more refined, more spiritual. The bread and wine are but the dishes, in which this feast is served up; not the feast itself. Faith feeds the soul, not in the vulgar common way, but nourishes it in a mystical manner. It eats, not the bread, but the breaking of it: it drinks, not the wine, but the pouring of it forth. The elements may seem lean, poor, and beggarly in themselves: but, when a transubstantiating faith shall turn the bread into the body of Christ, and the wine into his blood, it will make a believing soul cry out, with the Jews, in this chapter, "Lord, evermore give us this bread;" and, with the woman of Samaria, chap. iv., "Sir, give me of this water." It is a Christian's faith, that makes it bread incarnate. And, as Christ, by a miracle of power, turned water into wine, so here the faith of the receiver turns wine into blood. And, thus, by eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ, they are incorporated into him, and made one with him, members of his mystical body; and shall be certainly raised by him to an incorruptible and glorious life.

ii. We have thus considered the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as it is a sign. I shall now proceed to consider it as a SEAL: and, under this respect also, it is only FAITH IN THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST, THAT CAN MAKE IT ANY WAY USEFUL AND BENEFICIAL UNTO US. For, as the Sacrament represents nothing, so it seals nothing, without faith.

Now, here, I shall briefly inquire into these four things:

Why the Sacrament is called a seal.

What it seals unto, or to what it is affixed.

Whose seal it is; whether God's, or ours.

That faith alone, in the sufferings of Christ Jesus, makes its sealing office beneficial and advantageous to us.

1. *Why the Sacrament is called a seal.*

A seal, you know, is added for the confirmation and ratifying of any compact, bargain, or covenant between party and party. The Sacrament, therefore, is called a seal, because it is annexed to that bargain and covenant, that God hath made with man. For, herein, God is pleased to be so gracious to our infirmity, that he hath not

only passed his word, but hath also confirmed his covenant by seals; "that by two immutable things, wherein it was not possible for God to lie, we might have abundant consolation." And therefore, the circumcision of Abraham, which was then the Sacrament of initiation, to which, in the Christian Church, Baptism succeeded, this circumcision is called, Rom. iv. 11, "A seal of the righteousness of faith." And the cup, in this ordinance of the Lord's Supper, is said by the Apostle, 1 Cor. xi. 25, to be "the new testament in" the "blood" of Christ. Now what else can be understood by that synecdoche, that the cup is the New Testament, but only that it is a seal set to the New Testament; the last will of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that covenant which he hath ratified with us in his blood? Thus, therefore, it is called a seal, because it is a confirmation of the covenant, made between God and man; even as a seal is a confirmation of any agreement, made between man and man.

2. Therefore let us inquire *what the Sacrament seals unto.*

The Sacrament's sealing being nothing else but the confirmation of the truth of that to which it is set, we may conceive that the Sacrament seals to, *i. e.* it attests and confirms two things, viz., Our faith and God's covenant.

(1) It seals to our faith, two ways:

[1] Directly and formally: in that we do, by receiving this holy ordinance, attest unto God the truth of our faith; that we do indeed believe on Christ Jesus exhibited in it.

And, therefore, as the Sacrament represents unto us the death of Christ, and what he suffered for our redemption and salvation, as it is a sign; so, as it is a seal, it doth witness and attest, that we do indeed lay hold on his death, and apply those sufferings by faith unto our own souls. Whensoever a true believer comes to partake of this ordinance, and sees the bread broken and the wine poured forth, signifying unto him the breaking of Christ's body and the shedding of his blood, he ought then to lift up his heart to God; and, in the silent devotions of his soul, to say, "Lord, I believe on thy Son thus broken, and on his blood thus poured out for me: and, to attest and witness that I do indeed believe, behold, I now receive this thy Holy Sacrament; and, by it, do set seal to the truth of my faith, accepting of my blessed Saviour, and sincerely devoting myself unto him."

[2] It seals to our faith consecutively, by way of effect and causality; as the receiving of it doth mightily confirm and strengthen our faith.

For, there is no ordinance of God whatsoever, that is more accommodated to the increase of faith than this: in that it doth, as it were, set the death of Christ before our eyes. For, though faith be evacuated where there is clear and perfect vision, yet where the representation is such as doth not fully discover the object, but only hint it unto us, as it is here in the Sacrament, faith takes a mighty advantage from the type and resemblance that sense perceives, to look into those more spiritual objects represented by these material signs, which to the eye of sense are altogether invisible. And, indeed, when we consider that God hath not only engaged his word, that whosoever believeth shall be saved; but hath also instituted this ordinance, as a witness between him and us, that he will certainly perform this gracious promise, if we perform the condition; we may well have strong faith, and strong consolation from that faith, since he hath been pleased to assure our salvation to us, both by his word, and by this pledge of the truth and fidelity of his word. And, in this sense, our faith may be said to be sealed by the Sacrament, because it is thereby greatly confirmed and strengthened.

(2) But, then, as the Sacrament seals to our faith; so, it seals also to God's covenant with us.

The brief tenor of this covenant you have expressly contained in those few words, Mark xvi. 16; "He, that believeth....shall be saved." And to this covenant the Sacrament is affixed as a seal.

And, in it, there are two things, that admit of sealing:

The tenor of the covenant itself.

Our propriety and interest in the mercy promised.

The tenor of the covenant consists in this: If I believe, I shall be saved. Our interest and propriety in the covenant consist in this: But I do believe, and therefore I shall be saved.

Now each of these may be sealed unto the soul: and, accordingly, there is a twofold sealing:

An external sealing, by the Sacrament.

An internal sealing, by the Spirit.

Of these, the external sealing only respects the Sacrament. For, in this ordinance, God seals unto me, that, if I believe on the Lord Jesus, I shall be saved; and gives me a visible pledge of this promise, that, as sure as I eat of the sacramental bread and drink of the wine, so surely, upon my faith, I shall inherit eternal life. And this, indeed, is the most proper sealing use, which the Sacrament hath.

But the internal sealing of the Spirit, in our own consciences,

respects our peculiar right and interest in this covenant. For, though the Sacrament seals to me, that, if I believe, I shall be saved; yet it doth not properly seal and attest to me, that I do believe, and therefore shall be saved. But this is the work of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of adoption, which seals us up unto the day of redemption; and works in the hearts of many believers a full assurance, that grace is already wrought in them, and that glory shall hereafter be bestowed upon them.

And thus you see to what it is, that the Sacrament seals. Principally and primarily, it seals to the truth of the conditional covenant, as a pledge of God's veracity: but, secondarily, it seals also to our faith, as it is a means instituted by God for the strengthening and increasing of it.

3. By what hath been spoken, we may easily give a resolution to the third question, *Whose seal it is: whether God's or ours:* for it is both.

(1) It is God's seal only, in respect of its institution. For he hath appointed this holy ordinance as a seal between him and us. And, indeed, this is so essential to the nature and being of a sacrament, that nothing can be such, but what hath the stamp of divine institution to warrant it.

(2) It is God's seal, as it is affixed to his part of the covenant. For, in this sacrament, he seals to us, that, if we believe, we shall certainly be saved.

But, then,

(3) It is our seal, as we do, by receiving it, testify and declare the truth and reality of our faith; and that we do believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, as he is exhibited unto us in this sacrament.

4. These things, therefore, being thus clear, I shall come to the fourth general head propounded, which indeed I principally intended, viz: That *it is faith alone, in the death and sufferings of Jesus Christ, that makes the Seal of the Sacrament useful and beneficial to our souls.*

(1) It is true, indeed, that, whether we believe or no, this ordinance will still seal the truth and stability of God's covenant, that, if we believe, we shall be saved.

Yet, if we do not believe, of what use or benefit will this be to us? Yea, it will rather be a fearful aggravation of our just condemnation: in that God hath not only given his word for our salvation, but hath so far condescended as to set his seal to it in this holy ordinance; and, yet, neither salvation promised, nor this promise sealed, can work upon us to act that faith, upon which heaven and happiness are assured.

(2) The Sacrament, without faith in the partakers, will be still a seal.

Yea, but it will only seal them up to the day of destruction. For, as to a believing soul it seals his salvation, so to an unbelieving partaker it only seals his eternal damnation. This great ordinance is never empty nor insignificant: it hath its signifying, it hath its sealing office, to the unbelieving receiver, as well as to the believing. So that I may say, to all those who join themselves in this communion, what Christ said to the Jews, "What come you hither to see? or what come you hither to receive? A little bread and wine? Nay, I say unto you, more than bread and wine: for this is he, of whom it is prophesied, That, if ye eat his flesh, and drink his blood, ye shall have eternal life." If ye be believers, here ye may see, as in a type, the whole load of that wrath, which Christ underwent for your sins: if any of you be unbelievers, here you may see, as in a type, the whole load of that wrath, which you, in your own persons, must eternally undergo for your own sins. If you are believers, here you may receive a firm pledge and security for your salvation: if unbelievers, here you will receive your damnation too surely confirmed to your souls, under the hand and seal of God himself. It will be in vain to think to plead with God at the last day, like those who pleaded in vain, Luke xiii. 25, 26, "Lord, Lord, open unto us.....for we have eaten and drunk in thy presence." True: but did not God even then seal unto you, that, unless you would believe and bring forth the fruits of a true faith in a holy life, you should as certainly perish, as you did then eat and drink? You had his seal, indeed: but it was only set to ratify your condemnation, so long as you should continue in your impenitence and unbelief. Had you performed the condition of the covenant, this seal had been set to the promise, and confirmed your pardon and justification; but, for want of it, you will at last with horror see it affixed to the writ and warrant for your execution. Now how sad and deplorable a thing is this, that, when this holy ordinance is so full of consolation and ravishing delights to the worthy partakers, sealing unto them the remission of their sins and their acceptation to eternal life, it should, for want of a true and saving faith, seal up any soul under wrath and condemnation!

This twofold sealing office, the Sacrament hath towards all that partake of it: it will seal to them the certainty of eternal life and salvation, if they believe; or of eternal wrath and condemnation, if they remain impenitent and unbelieving.

Without faith, the Sacrament can seal nothing to you, that is beneficial and profitable. When God holds forth to you in this ordinance Christ Jesus; and, through him, pardon, peace, and reconciliation, justification, adoption, yea, even heaven itself, and its everlasting glories; the believing partaker may boldly and sweetly say, that all these are his: for faith, indeed, is the conveyance of these things to the soul: and, therefore, wheresoever it is acted, it must needs make the Sacrament seal effectually. It is faith, that justifies; and therefore, this Sacrament, that seals unto you your justification, if you believe, seals effectually. It is faith, that makes you "accepted in the beloved;" for, "without faith it is impossible to please God:" and, therefore, this Sacrament, which seals your acceptance, upon your believing, seals effectually. It is faith, that saves you: and, therefore, this Sacrament, that seals unto you your salvation, if you believe, seals effectually. For it seals to you, that that shall be done, if you believe, which your believing will certainly do.

But yet all this it doth, by leading the soul to the consideration of, and recumbence upon, the sufferings of Jesus Christ, by which these benefits are procured. For it would be utterly in vain for faith to apprehend, or for the sacraments to seal to us, that, which was never purchased for us. And, therefore, the Apostle calls it, the cup of the New Testament in Christ's blood, in the fore-cited place: *i. e.* it is the seal of the New Testament, or covenant, in the blood of Christ. This seal must be dipped in blood, before it can ratify or confirm any privilege and benefit unto us. These are all purchased with blood; and they all come flowing down to us, in a stream of blood.

Whensoever, then, you come to this great seal-office of the Gospel, be sure that you set faith on work: else, your frequent communication in this ordinance, to say nothing worse, will be but the fastening and annexing of many seals to a large grant and charter, unto which you have no title. What a sad and wretched mistake will it be, if, after you have had the covenant so often sealed and confirmed, all those seals should prove of no more use or value, than if they were set to a blank! For the promise is no better than a blank, if the condition on your part be not performed. Will it not be sad and dreadful, when men, at the last day, arraigned by the justice of God, shall stand forth and plead, "Lord, here is the covenant, wherein thou hast promised me life and salvation: here are so many seals hanging at it, whereby thou hast confirmed that promise to me:" and then it shall be said, "True, here is the

covenant, and here are the seals; but where is the performance of the condition?" What a gross mistake, what shame and confusion of face, will this be, to look no better after the condition of that bond, and the nature of those seals that were to convey to us no less than an eternal inheritance!

When, therefore, you have the elements, the bread and the wine, delivered into your hands, do but seriously think with yourselves, "Now God is delivering a broken, a bleeding Saviour unto me. If I will by faith receive him, he testifies and seals by this bread and wine, that I shall certainly receive remission of my sins and everlasting life through him." Let us therefore say, "Lord Jesus, I now accept of thee upon thine own terms; on the very conditions, on which thou art pleased to tender thyself unto me. I take a broken Christ, for my entire Saviour; a Christ crowned with thorns, for my only King. He shall be my Prophet, whom the blasphemous Jews buffetted, and derided, with a 'Prophesy, Who smote thee?' As I reach forth my bodily hand, to receive the bread and the wine; so I reach forth the spiritual hand of my faith, to receive that Christ, whose body was thus broken, and whose blood was thus poured forth." Now, to those only, who thus by faith receive Christ Jesus, who thus eat his flesh and drink his blood, this sacrament doth seal and confirm, that they shall have eternal life by him, and shall be raised up at the last day to that glory with which he is invested.

III. And now, my brethren, I am sent to you, by my Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, who is both the Lord of the feast and the feast itself, to invite you to come, and to tell you that all things are ready. Behold, he himself expects you: and, after such cost that he hath been at in furnishing a table for you, when he hath provided his own flesh for your meat and his own blood for your drink; after so many kind and endearing invitations that he hath made you; he cannot but take it as a high contempt of his love, and an injury done to the friendship which he offers, if you should yet delay, or refuse his entertainment. Yet, I fear, it will befal this, as it did the wedding supper, that too many will make light of it; and, either by slight excuses or downright denials, leave this table unfurnished with guests, which is so abundantly furnished with provision. Must I be sent back with a refusal? Or shall I have that joyful answer from you all, that you will come? I hope I shall not return ashamed: that you will not turn your backs upon your Saviour, who hath given himself for you, and now offers himself unto you;

and that you will not damp the devotion of those, who present themselves to this holy institution, by the sad and discouraging consideration of the paucity of their number.

Suffer me a little to expostulate with you: and I beseech of you only these two things:

The one is, to lay aside all prejudice, and to consider things nakedly and impartially: weighing them only according to the clear evidence of truth; and not by the deceitful balance, either of preconceived opinions, or former practices.

The other is, that, in a matter which you yourselves must needs acknowledge to be doubtful and disputable, you would think it possible you may be mistaken.

Let not contrary customs, nor the deep impressions of any other persuasion, bribe your judgment to give its vote against the manifest dictates of truth and reason. For, otherwise, if we come to the disquisition of any opinion with prepossession and a stiff adherence to formerly received principles; though the proofs be clear and the arguments irrefragable, yet the affections will blindly mutiny and murmur against the convictions of reason, and think that still there might be somewhat more said in their own defence, though they know not what. Therefore, I beseech you, let not your affections lead your judgment, but your judgment them. Take the bias out of your minds. Consider things indifferently, as if you had never heard of them before; and be altogether unconcerned which side hath the truth, but only concerned to follow the truth when it appears so to you. This is but an equal request; not only in this, but in all other debates concerning the truth of doctrine: for, where the mind is forestalled with an overweening conceit, that the notions which we have already taken up are infallibly true and certain, and that whatsoever can be said against them is but sophistry and delusion; this will render us wholly incapable of being convinced of our mistakes, and reduced from our errors. Prejudice is the jaundice of the soul, and colors every thing by its own distemper. Or, as a man, that looks through a painted glass, sees every object of the same color that the glass is; so, when our understanding is once deeply tinctured with former notions, all that we look upon will receive a color from them: nor can we ever hope to see things as they are, until our judgment is cleansed from all things whatsoever, with which our affection to such a way, or our admiration of such persons, or any other perverter of reason, have painted and dyed them.

Let me, then, argue the case with you, and I shall do it plainly

and freely: and, I hope, without any bitterness; or giving offence to any, who will not be offended with reason, that contradicts them.

May not most of the SCRUPLES, that have hitherto kept you from communion with us in this gospel-ordinance of the Lord's Supper, be reduced to these four heads?

Some scruple their fitness and preparedness.

Others, the gesture of kneeling in receiving.

Others, our promiscuous assemblies; and the admission of those to the Sacrament, who are ignorant, or scandalous, or both.

Others are afraid of giving offence unto or grieving their weak brethren, who are not satisfied in the lawfulness of communicating with us upon the accounts before mentioned.

I think I have faithfully collected the sum of all that any have to object, under these four heads. And, if there be any thing which is not reducible to one of these, I should gladly learn it, and endeavor to give full satisfaction. Now, whether any of these be such excuses, as may sufficiently justify your rejecting the invitation I have made you to this gospel and spiritual feast, I shall leave to your own consciences to judge, after we have particularly examined them.

i. To the first, who desireth to be held excused; not because he judgeth the administration of the Sacrament in the way, wherein it is now dispensed, unlawful; but only because he LOOKS UPON HIMSELF AS UNPREPARED, AND THEREFORE IS AFRAID TO COME; I answer,

1. *Hast thou not had time and opportunities enough to prepare thyself?*

How often hast thou been warned and admonished, to fit and put on thy wedding-garments, for that thou wert by the great King of Heaven expected shortly to be at his supper! And dost thou make conscience not to come because thou art not prepared, and yet make no conscience to be prepared that thou mightest come? But,

2. *Judge thou, which is the greater sin, either wholly to neglect a duty, or else to perform it with such preparations as thou hast, or canst make, though they be not altogether such as they ought.*

We ought to be prepared, to pray unto God and to hear his word: yet, certainly, if we neglect our due preparations, it will be our sin, it cannot be our excuse; and we ought to perform these duties, the best we may, in the respective seasons of them. We

ought to be humbled for our want of preparation; but our want of preparation must not cheat God of his service. We are to labor with our hearts in the very entrance upon holy duties, if we have sinfully neglected it before, to bring them into some holy and spiritual frame, fit to maintain communion and fellowship with God. And know, for certain, that thou dost but double thy crime, whosoever thou art, that neglectest thy duty, because thou hast neglected thy preparation for thy duty: for this, indeed, is nothing else, but that thou darest not but sin, because thou hast sinned.

"But," some may say, "the Apostle terrifies me, in this matter of the Sacrament; by pronouncing that dreadful sentence, 1 Cor. xi. 29; 'He, that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself.' And, therefore, because I have sinned in neglecting due preparation, I dare no more approach unto those holy mysteries, than I dare eat burning coals, or swallow whole draughts of fire and brimstone."

It is true, the Apostle hath pronounced that terrible doom upon unworthy receiving: but, is it not as true, that he, that prays unworthily, prays damnation to himself; and he, that hears unworthily, hears damnation to himself? If thou art not worthy to receive the Sacrament, neither art thou worthy to pray, saith St. Chrysost. ad Pop. Ant. Hom. 61. Now wilt thou, or darest thou, omit the duties of praying or hearing, upon a pretence that thou art not sufficiently prepared to perform them? Certainly, if to receive unworthily, be damnation; then, not to receive at all, because thou art unworthy, is double damnation, being double guilt; unless thou canst sin thyself out of debt to God's commands; and make that to be no duty, upon thy offence, which was thy duty before it.

And, then, as for preparation, though it be very fit and requisite, that, before so solemn an ordinance as this is, we should allot some time for a more serious scrutiny and search of our own hearts, and the stirring up of the graces of God within us: yet I must profess, that I look upon that man, who hath endeavored to serve God conscientiously in the ordinary duties of every day, to be sufficiently prepared for this holy and blessed ordinance, if he be suddenly called to partake of it; and called to it he is, whensoever he hath an opportunity of receiving. And, that a pious and inoffensive Christian life was looked upon as the best preparation to this holy ordinance, as this ordinance itself was looked upon to be the greatest obligation to such a life, appears by the histories of the primitive times; wherein we have account given us, that the

Christians did every day, and, at the farthest, every Lord's Day, communicate in the Lord's supper: yea, in St. Cyprian's time, 250 years after Christ, he tells us, *Eucharistiam quotidie ad cibum salutis accipimus:* in Orat. Dom. num. 48. So, that certainly, there could be no considerable space of time set apart for a particular preparation; but a holy, blameless life was thought sufficient to qualify them for worthy receivers: neither do we find that they put such a mock-honor upon the Holy Sacrament, as to advance it so high, that they durst not come near it; and to neglect it, out of pure respect.

And this is all that I shall leave to the consideration of those, who absent themselves, because they are not duly prepared. It is their great sin, that they are not prepared: but this sin cannot excuse them from their duty. To avoid one sin, they become guilty of two: to avoid receiving unworthily, they receive not at all; but most unworthily forbear: and, because they sin in not preparing, they resolve likewise to sin in not receiving. Which is just as good an excuse, as if a servant should therefore refuse to do any thing the whole day, because he rose not so early in the morning as he should have done.

ii. Others scruple the very lawfulness of receiving the Sacrament in our way of administering it; and say they are not satisfied as to the GESTURE OF KNEELING; for so, and not otherwise, hath authority commanded us to communicate.

Two things they object against it:

The one, that it symbolizeth too much with the idolatry of the Church of Rome.

The other, that, not kneeling, but sitting, is a table-posture; and that, which Christ used when he celebrated his last supper with his Apostles, whose example we ought to imitate.

1. It is objected, that *It symbolizeth and agreeth too much with the idolatry of the Romish Church.* For they, according to their absurd and impious doctrine of transubstantiation, falsely believing the corporeal presence of Christ in the Eucharist, that the bread is truly and properly his body and the wine his blood, do, consonantly enough to that error, fall down and worship him whom they believe to be there bodily present. If, therefore, we disavow that doctrine, why should we imitate that practice?

To this I answer:

(1) It is well known that the Pope himself, the head and prince

of that Anti-christian synagogue, receives the Sacrament sitting, and not kneeling: thinking it, belike, the privilege and prerogative of his supereminent dignity, to be more rude and unmannerly; and more, as it were, of an equal fellow with our Saviour than is allowed unto others.

Yet, we object it not to our dissenting brethren, that they imitate this man of sin, who exalts himself above all that is called God: for they disavow it. Let them afford us the same charity; and be more sober and modest than to object to us, that we imitate his vassals: for this we equally disavow and renounce.

I answer,

(2) That a gesture abused to idolatry, becomes not therefore idolatrous.

Otherwise, because the heathen used kneeling and prostration to their false gods, it would now be unlawful for Christians to use them to the true. And why do they not object to us, that the Papists do idolatrously kneel to their images, and when they pray to their saints, and that therefore we must not kneel when we worship God; but, that we may be at a perfect distance, both from Rome and reason, must sit, as too many of them most irreverently do in their choicest devotions?

I answer,

(3) That the end, for which all outward postures of the body are used, determines them; and makes them either morally good or evil: for kneeling, being of itself an indifferent action, it is only the end which we propound to ourselves in it, which can render it good or bad.

Now, lest any should be either so weak or so ill-natured, as to surmise that this custom is retained as a relic of idolatry, and that it will prove an advantage for it to creep in again amongst us, see what the Church hath most expressly declared, in that excellent caution annexed at the end of the order for the Communion: "Lest," say they, "that kneeling should, by any persons, be misconstrued and depraved, it is declared, that thereby no adoration is intended, or ought to be done either to the Sacramental bread and wine there bodily received, or to any corporeal presence of Christ's natural flesh and blood. For the Sacramental bread and wine remain still in their very natural substances, and therefore may not be adored; for that were idolatry, to be abhorred by all faithful Christians. And the natural body and blood of our Saviour Christ are in heaven, and not here: it being against the truth of Christ's natural body, to be at one time in more places

than one." A declaration, let me speak it without offence, that will be of more validity to keep out that prodigious and stupid error of Popery, than all the discontented clamors of those who cry, "It is coming in." And, if ever God so far abandon us to suffer that pestilent doctrine again to prevail over us, it must first be by pulling down the orders and discipline of the Church: which some, with equal zeal and ignorance, are very busy to do; and therefore prove the most industrious factors for the promoting of that cause, which they pretend most of all to detest. And if ever the discontents and divisions of Protestants proceed to effect, what the misled passions and furious bigotry of so many of them design, then, and not till then, shall the Anti-christian faction obtain its ends; and enter upon that harvest which our rents, schisms, and separations have ripened for them. I speak the words of truth and soberness: you, that are wise, judge ye what I say.

But, then,

2. Others object against kneeling, that *It is not a table-posture:* it was not used by our Lord nor his disciples, when he instituted this most holy ordinance. And why should not we be allowed to imitate Christ, and them; and, to receive the Sacrament in the same posture wherein he administered it, that is, sitting, or some other gesture correspondent to it, since his pattern, where we have no express command, is the best rule and guide of our actions?

To this I answer:

(1) It must be proved, that Christ used that gesture, intending to make it exemplary to us, and obliging us to the imitation of it.

If this cannot be, then he used it as a thing wholly indifferent. And all know, that those actions of Christ, which were merely indifferent, lay no obligation upon our practice to do the like. If all the circumstances, that Christ observed in the administration of his supper, must likewise be necessarily observed by us, then must we celebrate it in the evening, after supper, in an upper room, and that leaning upon beds; with many other particulars, which long use and custom have made obsolete, if not to us absurd and ridiculous. But these being all indifferent things, they lay no obligation upon us to imitate them.

(2) We do not condemn sitting, in those Churches, whose laws have not prescribed against it.

The customs of churches are, in this particular, diverse: and let each retain its own, so long as there is nothing in it substantially and materially amiss. Some reformed Churches receive sitting; others, standing or walking. Now, were I cast among those

Churches, I would never refuse their communion, because they did not kneel: neither would I kneel myself; to avoid giving offence, by introducing a practice, which, though as lawful as theirs and perhaps more commendable, yet would be a stranger to their custom. Would any of you, were you in the reformed Churches of France, forsake their communion, rather than receive any other way than sitting? I suppose you would conform to their gesture of standing or walking: and why not then to ours, of kneeling; unless it be, that nothing so much displeaseth, as what we find at home? For the surmise of idolatry in it, I have before proved it vain. This I am sure is the direction, which St. Ambrose gave to St. Augustin's mother, Monica, when she was to travel to other Churches, that observed different customs from that of Milan: "If thou wilt not," saith he, "either give offence, or take offence, conform thyself to all the lawful customs of the Church whither thou comest."

(3) I think I may somewhat forcibly retort the argument.

"Our Saviour," say they, "used sitting: therefore we ought not to kneel." Yea, let it not seem strange to you if I argue thus: "Our Saviour used sitting: therefore we may kneel." This consequence, which may possibly seem somewhat uncouth at first, I make good thus: In the institution of the Passover, God commanded that it should be eaten in a standing posture, with their shoes on their feet, and their staves in their hands: but yet time and custom had at length worn out this observation: and, therefore, when the use of the nation had brought it to recumbency, or leaning on beds after the Roman manner, though at first there were an express command for another gesture; yet our Saviour so far accommodates himself to the received custom, as to use it with them. Now could there be as much produced to prove the necessity of sitting at the Sacrament, as there might have been to prove the necessity of standing at the Passover; I doubt whether those, who plead so much for it, would not mainly triumph in such an argument, and account it altogether unanswerable. And yet we see the custom of the Jewish Church prevails with our Saviour to do that, which seems literally to contradict a command of God; and, rather than he would go contrary to the observances that were then in use among them, he chooseth to omit that which was required in the primitive institution: how much more then ought we, who have nothing at all left to determine the gesture, to conform ourselves to the usage of the Church in which we live, and whose members we are! for this is to conform ourselves, not indeed

to the very gesture, but, what is much more considerable, to the will and intention of Christ.

But then, again,

(4) Whereas it is objected, that kneeling is a very improper posture at a table, I think, if I should pass it over with this short answer, that the peace and unity of the Church is more to be regarded, than what some men account proper or improper; and, that it is not the accurateness of every petty circumstance and punctilio, that ought to be laid in the balance against so weighty and fundamental a duty, as our participation of this ordinance; and, that it is no extenuation of our sin, to turn our backs upon these holy mysteries, because every thing is not ordered as we fancy, and deem most convenient: if, I say, I should give no other answer but this, yet, I suppose, this would be enough to satisfy all grave and considerate persons.

But, yet, to vindicate this custom from the imputation of impropriety, let us add further:

[1] That that can be no unfitting gesture, which is most significant of our humility and prostration of soul.

Should we grovel in the very dust before our dear Redeemer, to testify our abhorrence of ourselves, and our most bitter repentance for those sins which shed that most precious blood, and brake and pierced that blessed body, which our Lord Jesus Christ comes there to offer us as a pledge of our pardon and salvation, would any be so proudly censorious as to call this an improper action? Or is it improper, for guilty malefactors, rebels cast and condemned by law, to receive their pardon upon their knees? Doth not God seal to every penitent and believing sinner the pardon of his sins, and his acceptation into grace and favor, in this holy Sacrament? and can any gesture be so humble and reverent, as to be judged improper for the receiving of so great and so inestimable a mercy as that?

[2] Consider that the very sacramental action itself is accompanied with prayer.

There are both thanksgiving and petition in it; and both those are parts of prayer: and what gesture more proper for prayer, than kneeling? The Sacrament itself is a sacrifice of praise; and, therefore, constantly called by the ancients Ευχαριστια, or "*Thanksgiving.*" And the administration of it is attended with prayer: "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul:" and, "The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life:" now he must have the knees of an elephant and the heart of

an oak, who will not bow himself, and, with all humble adoration and worship, cry Amen to a prayer so pathetic, made by the minister to God on his behalf.

And, so much, for the second great objection about the posture: wherein I hope I have sufficiently evinced, that kneeling, in the act of receiving, is neither idolatrous, nor improper, nor a deviation from the example of our Lord and Saviour.

iii. Another great stumbling-block, which lies in the way, which yet I hope to remove if you yourselves do not fasten it by your prejudices, is that of PROMISCUOUS RECEIVING; and the admission of those to the Sacrament, who are ignorant, or scandalous, or both.

To answer this,

1. *Dost thou know any of them to be so?*

If not, the standing rule of charity is, to think no evil: 1 Cor. xiii. 5. A doctrine, much to be pressed upon this wildly censorious age; wherein every one judgeth himself to be holy and godly, according as he can judge and condemn others to be wicked and ungodly. And, let me tell you freely, this whispering and backbiting, and entertaining of blind rumors and idle reports, screwing and wresting everything to the worst sense, and speaking evil of others at random and peradventure, is, according to the observations that I have been able to make, a great and reigning sin in this corner of the world: and it is a sin so contrary to the mild and gentle spirit of the Gospel, a sin so truly suspicious of hypocrisy and pharisaism, that I profess I think I should as soon think a man a good Christian because he is proud, or because he is envious or malicious, as I should because he is continually accusing, and censuring, and exclaiming against the faults of other men; as if it were a certain mark of his Christianity, to set a mark of infamy upon others.

2. But, then, suppose thou dost certainly know them guilty, and therefore refused to communicate with them, let me ask thee, *Whether thou hast observed the rule of Jesus Christ towards thy offending brother, before thou thus account him a heathen and a publican.*

The rule, that he hath given us, we find Mat. xviii. 15, 16, 17. And it is a most observable place to this purpose: "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that, in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word

may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen-man and a publican." This is a perpetual standing rule in this case, from which we ought not to vary. "If thy brother shall trespass against thee:" *i. e.* not only if he shall wrong thee, but if he shall wrong either his God or his religion, by any flagitious crime that gives offence and scandal to thee, and so is a trespass also against thee: what then? must thou presently forsake the communion of the Church, because of such an one's offences? No, saith our Saviour, first of all it is thy duty to admonish him privately: if, thereupon, he reform, thou savest thy brother: if yet he persist, thou must not as yet break off communion with him, but try another course. Take with thee grave and faithful witnesses, and again admonish and reprove him. Though this course should not prevail neither, yet still thou must own him as thy brother; and communicate in all ordinances with him, till thou hast tried the last remedy: and that is, to tell the Church: *i. e.* the Sanhedrim, who, in our Saviour's time, were both ecclesiastical and civil judges: inform those of his miscarriages, who have the power of the keys committed unto them. And, if he hear not them neither, but still persist obstinately and resolvedly in his sins, then at last, "let him be unto thee as a heathen-man and a publican;" that is, after the Church hath excommunicated, and cast him out from the assembly and society of the faithful: for that is supposed in those words, "if he hear not the Church," and will not obey their sentence and decree.

(1) "But suppose I should tell the Church, and yet the offender is not cut off by a due execution of the sentence of excommunication, may I not then look upon him as a heathen, and refuse communion with him?"

By no means: for our Saviour, in this place, bids us to account such as a heathen and a publican, on supposition only of Church-censures passed upon him. And therefore he presently adds, v. 17, "Let him be unto thee as a heathen-man and a publican;" and, v. 18, "Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven:" *i. e.* whosesoever sins ye shall bind upon his soul by the dreadful sentence of excommunication, they shall be bound upon his soul by the God of heaven, and your deed shall be ratified and confirmed by his justice. So, then, as long as he continues in the Church, so long thou oughtest to account him thy brother, and to communicate with him in all ordinances: for, though thou oughtest to be his reprover, yet thou art not to be

his judge; neither must thou remove thyself, because perhaps thou canst not remove him. What some men's opinion in this matter may be, I do not know; but I am sure this is the mind of Jesus Christ, and his express command.

Now thou, who refusest to come to the holy communion, because perhaps there may be some scandalous sinner there, hast thou discharged thy duty first towards him? Hast thou rebuked him privately, between him and thee? Hast thou, upon contempt of that private admonition, rebuked him before select witnesses? Hast thou, upon his continued obstinacy, complained to the Church of the scandal and offence which he hath given thee? If not, whosoever thou be, I charge it upon thy soul, and answer it to God, his judge and thine, how darest thou to separate from the communion of the Church? How darest thou contradict the express order and command of Christ; and think thyself the more holy and more pure, for doing so? Is this conscience? Is this religion? Is this strict piety and godliness? Let me tell thee, it is a piece of gross hypocrisy and pharisaical pride, to separate, because of their sins, and yet never to reprove them for their sins. Never think, by this course, to escape being a partaker of their guilt. If they profane this holy ordinance, if they eat and drink damnation to themselves, thou art the cause of it, who oughtest, after admonition, to have accused them; and art as much polluted by it, as if thou hadst joined with them; yea, and more, since another man's sins cannot pollute me, unless I am defective in my own duty. Thou communicatest with them in their guilt and sin, but only refusest to communicate with them in the worship and service of God.

(2) But, possibly you will say, "Tell the Church! To what purpose is that? When is it, that we see any cut off for notorious and scandalous crimes? It may be for disobeying the orders of the Church in point of government and discipline, some few may undergo this heavy censure; but fewer for transgressing the laws of God, and the great precepts of moral and Christian honesty."

To this I answer:

[1] It is a gross, though common mistake, to think, that disobedience against the lawful commands of authority, is not as heinous a sin, as those open pollutions which abound too much in the world, and appear black and ugly to every man's eye and reason: for, sure I am, it is as often and as expressly forbidden, as any sin whatsoever; and the consequences of it are of more public mischief, than those of other sins, which may be more scandalous, but cannot be more damning.

[2] I answer: That never was there, nor indeed can there be, either in our Church or in any other Church, shape the government of it after what model you please, any person excommunicated, but only upon the account of contempt of its authority. Let his crime be what it will, in the first instance; yet it cannot be for that, but only for disobedience, that this dreadful sentence is denounced against any. For, if the offender submit and be penitent, there needs no such censure; since it is appointed only to bring him to repentance. If he doth not submit, either to the trial of the cause, or the satisfaction imposed: in the first case, there can be no judgment made concerning the crime of which he stands accused; in the second, he is excommunicated, not because his guilt is proved, but because he obstinately refuseth to give due satisfaction for it: so that, in both, it is merely contempt and disobedience, that can involve any person in this censure. And this holds certainly and universally of all the Churches of Christ upon earth, of whatsoever denomination or discipline they be.

[3] But if so few are excommunicated, who are guilty of scandalous and flagitious offences, I beseech you to consider, whether a great part of this blame may not be laid upon yourselves, for not doing your duty in accusing and convicting them. Have you ever made any public complaints against obstinate and incorrigible sinners, that were not heard and accepted? If not, why do you accuse the Church, to which you ought to accuse others?

But, once for all, let me speak it to you who are of this parish, that, if any of you shall duly accuse any of those too few who communicate with us of a scandalous crime committed by him, and will undertake to prove and justify his accusation, I will here undertake not to admit such an one, until he hath given satisfaction according to the nature of his offence.

But, howsoever, suppose that all the officers of the Church were negligent in their duty, that can be no excuse for not performing yours. If you do your duty, you leave it upon their consciences, and have delivered your own souls. But, in any case, you ought not to separate from communion with any Church-member, till he ceaseth to be a Church-member, and is cut off by the sword of excommunication. Then, and not till then, you may look upon him as a heathen-man and a publican. For wicked men's communicating pollutes the ordinance, only to themselves, and not to you: if they eat and drink unworthily, they eat and drink damnation to themselves, but not to the worthy partakers. The virtue and efficacy of the ordinances come not to you, through those who are

communicants with you; for then, indeed, it might receive a taint from their pollution: but it comes immediately from the institution and benediction of Jesus Christ. So that, when you have performed your duty, you may receive a pure sacrament in the assembly, whereof some may be impure and defiled.

But here I know, flesh and blood will tumultuate, and say, "This is the ready way to run my head into a bee-hive. What need I, that may live quietly by my neighbors, provoke their enmity and hatred by turning informer? For accusing them will prove but a thankless and troublesome office."

Truly, I know no necessity for it, besides the strict and express command of Jesus Christ. And wilt thou be thought to value the purity of his ordinances, who dost not value the authority of his commands? "Tell it the Church," is his injunction: and, if this be to be an informer, know that the name is more honorable, than is vulgarly apprehended; and it is far better to be an informer, than a schismatic.

(3) But the great place insisted on to invalidate all this that I have said, is 1 Cor. v. 11; "But now I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one, no not to eat." And from this it is argued, that if I may not eat common bread with them; then, much less, may I eat sacred bread with them, at the Lord's table.

I am sorry I have so just occasion to retort the argument against their practice. For, certainly, if our dissenting brethren would exclude all fornicators, and railers, and drunkards, from their society, their sacraments would not be such general musters as they are, but perhaps be as thin as ours.

But to pass that by, I return a double answer.

[1] That we may well conceive the Apostle here giving direction to the whole Church of the Corinthians, what method they should use towards those, who were profligates and notorious sinners.

And he bids them, that they should not company, nor eat with them: *i. e.* that they should cast them out of the Church; not cast themselves out: they should excommunicate them from the body of the faithful; but not that any of them should separate from the communion of holy ordinances, before they were excommunicated. This sense seems very fair and full: for, in the foregoing part of the chapter, the Apostle had given them in charge, to cast out the incestuous person: who was a notorious example of wick-

edness, and a great scandal to their Church: afterwards, he sets down rules, how they should demean themselves towards others, who were likewise guilty of known crimes: and these he distinguisheth into two sorts; those, who visibly belonged to the world, and were professed heathens; and those, who belonged to the visible church, and were wicked Christians. For the former sort, he tells them, that they might civilly eat with them, vv. 9, 10; "I wrote unto you in an epistle, not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world:" that is, I meant not that you should wholly abstain from the converse of heathens, who are vile and wicked; for, since the greatest part of the world are heathens, the necessity of human life requires that you should have commerce and dealing with them. But, for the other sort, those who are lewd and wicked Christians, cast them out: company not: eat not with any brother that is a fornicator, or covetous, or a drunkard, or the like: account them as heathens, yea, worse than heathens, inasmuch as they deny that faith by their practice, which they profess with their mouths. The whole scope of which seems to be, that the Apostle commands them to deal with such as with the incestuous person, and that the Church ought to cut them off by excommunication; but not that any member of the Church should separate from communion with them in the public ordinances, until that judicial act were passed upon them. But,

[2] Most likely it is, that, when the Apostle forbids us to eat with such, he means only familiar, domestical eating; and not ecclesiastical, in the participation of the Lord's Supper; if so be they be not cut off by the censure of excommunication.

And that appears, because the Apostle forbids them so to eat with wicked Christians, as they might lawfully eat with wicked and idolatrous heathens. "I forbid not," saith he, "all converse with heathens, that never made profession of the faith and religion of Jesus Christ: but I forbid you to company with a brother, that walketh disorderly; yea, I would not have you so much as to eat with such an one." Now if they might eat with professed heathens, but not with licentious Christians, I suppose it will be evident to every one, that hath but understanding enough to name him a man, that this eating, here spoken of, was not eating at the Sacrament, for what had heathens to do there? but only of private, friendly, and familiar eating.

But, still, it may be and it is urged, that, "If we may not eat

with them civilly at their own table, much less then may we eat with them religiously at God's."

To this, I answer,

1st. That we have now the same liberty allowed for our converse with wicked Christians, as the Apostle granted for converse with wicked heathens; or else, truly, as he saith, "we must needs go out of the world." And, therefore, the circumstances of times being so much altered, we may lawfully eat and converse with them, since, in many places, there are few others to converse with.

I answer,

2dly. It doth not at all follow, that, if I may not eat familiarly with a loose Christian, therefore I may not eat sacramentally with him: for the one is of mere choice; the other is my necessary duty, till he be cast out of the Church. I may choose my acquaintance and familiar friend, with whom to converse: and, if I choose those who are wicked and ungodly, I then sin; because I show I have a delight in vain persons. But I cannot choose Church-members; nor say I will communicate with this man, and not with this, till one of them be cut off from the body of Christ by excommunication, unless I intend to make a rent and a schism; which certainly they do, who depart from the communion of the Church, upon such a pretence.

This, I think, may be sufficient, in answer to the third great objection, That it is unlawful to partake with us of the Lord's Supper, because sometimes wicked men are admitted unto it. For, besides that our Saviour himself admitted Judas, whom he calls a devil; and that the congregations of the schism are not so perfectly pure, but that we may, without breach of charity, tell them, all are not saints whom they admit: besides this, if you know any scandalous persons among us, it is your own fault that they are admitted. And will you leave off that, which is your duty, for not doing your duty? If, when you have done your duty, yet they are still retained, the fault ceaseth to be yours, and lies upon them whose care it ought to be to exclude such; nor doth your communion in that case pollute the ordinance to you. We are not to eat with them after they are cut off by the censures of the Church; but we may eat with them whilst they continue members of the Church, although perhaps it may be the sin of others to retain them.

iv. Lastly, Some may think it unlawful to communicate with us,

because of the SCANDAL AND OFFENCE, THAT THEREBY WILL BE GIVEN TO WEAK BRETHREN. Though they have no such great doubts nor scruples in themselves, that should deter them from coming; yet they are afraid of that woe, which Christ hath denounced against those who offend any of the little ones.

To this I answer only in brief, That if we are once fully satisfied in our consciences that it is our duty, we ought not to take any notice at all of the censures and offences of the whole world. Yea, though the offence they take should not be only an offence of contristation, and cause sorrow in them when they see us do that which is contrary to their present judgment; but though it should prove an occasion of sin unto them: yet we ought not to forbear it; nor to sin ourselves, to keep others from sinning. For, as we must not do evil out of hope that good may come thereby, so neither must we forbear what is good out of fear that evil may ensue thereupon. When we approve ourselves to God and our own consciences, we ought not to value the censures of others, who decry our duties; nor to put ourselves out of the way of our obedience, to put others out of their groundless offences. If they will be offended at my doing of my duty, let them be offended: and this shall be my comfort, that, if I have not their good word, yet I shall have the good word of my own conscience; and, at last, the good word of my God, with an *Euge*, "Well done, good and faithful servant;" and then, let all the men in the world think and speak what they will of me.

And thus I have gone through those four grand objections, that usually keep men off from participating in the holy ordinance of the Lord's Supper, and hope I have answered them satisfactorily.

Nothing now remains, but earnestly to beseech you, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, who offers that flesh and blood to you, which he offered upon the cross to his father, that you would no longer content yourselves in your separation; but come unanimously with us, to receive that blood, by which both you and we hope to be saved. And let not some little circumstances (which yet you see how defensible they are, and how hard to be gainsaid by scripture or reason) make you fly off from so substantial and necessary a duty as this is. Certainly, it shows that we have but little spiritual hunger and thirst, if we cannot endure wholesome food, though it be not in every particular dressed as we could fancy.

THE

# ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST TO SAVE SINNERS,

## WITH THE PREVALENCY OF HIS INTERCESSION.

*Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him: seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.* HEB. vii. 25.

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### INTRODUCTION.

THE general design of the Apostle in this Epistle, is, to show the dignity of Christ, above the Levitical Priesthood: which he doth, as by many other deep and accurate arguments: so, likewise, by affirming him to be a priest, "after the order of Melchisedec," in the last verse of the foregoing chapter.

In this chapter he prosecutes the argument, by drawing a long parallel, between the priesthood according to Melchisedec's order, and the priesthood according to Aaron's order: and, in every comparison, he gives the pre-eminence to the former above the latter; and thereby proves, that Christ, who was a priest "after the order of Melchisedec," obtained a more excellent priesthood than they, who were priests according to the order of Aaron.

1. Now because, in this parallel, there are many things hard to be understood, I shall give you a brief EXPLICATION of them, and thereby bring you to the text.

Concerning this Melchisedec, there is much inquiry who he was. Some think him to be Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Second Person in the Blessed Trinity; who assumed human shape then, when Abraham returned from pursuing the four kings: but this is altogether impossible, because the Scripture makes him to be the "King of Salem," a visible and a temporal king over Jerusalem; for, by Salem, that must be implied, as is clear from Ps. lxxvi. 2. Others conjecture this Melchisedec to be the same with Shem, the son of Noah; but whether it was he or no, it is not much material: this is certain, that he was appointed and raised up by God to be an eminent and illustrious type of our High-priest, Jesus Christ.

i. Now, though the Levitical Priesthood was a clear type of Christ's priesthood, yet this Melchisedec, who lived four hundred

years before the institution of that order, WAS A MORE CLOSE, ADEQUATE TYPE, and far superior to them. And this is here expressed:

1. In that he was *King of Salem, as well as priest of the Most High God:* v. 4.

Now the Levitical Priests were not kings, as he was: as, in those first ages of the world, it was a usual custom, for the same person that was king to exercise the priestly office; and therefore he was a more express resemblance of Christ, than the Aaronical priests were.

2. In that he was described to be *first King of Righteousness, and then King of Salem:* v. 2, that is, *the King of Peace.*

Herein, also, he is a most lively type of Christ, who observed the same order. Christ was "King of Righteousness," to subdue our sins and sanctify our natures: and he was "King of Peace," to pacify our consciences, through the assurance of pardon and acceptance; for this peace he doth usually bestow upon us, as the fruits of righteousness formerly communicated to us.

3. In that he was *without father or mother, without descent; having neither beginning of days, nor end of life,* as Melchisedec is described in the third verse.

And, herein, he outvies the Aaronical priesthood: for their birth and death the Scripture records; but, of Melchisedec, it witnesseth that "he liveth:" v. 8. Now, herein, he is a nearer resemblance to Christ, than they: for Christ, as God, was "without mother;" and, as man, he was "without a father:" as God, he hath not "beginning of days;" as God and man, he is without "end of life."

4. In that *Aaron, who was the father of all the Aaronical Priests, did pay tithe to him:* so v. 4.

And he received them from him: v. 6, which denotes that Abraham himself was inferior to him: as v. 7; and much more the children of Levi, the offspring of Aaron, who themselves are said to pay tithes to Melchisedec, being in the loins of their father Abraham: as we have it in the 9th and 10th verses. As the public acts of the parent are interpretively the acts of a child, so likewise Abraham's paying tithes to Melchisedec is recorded by God, as Levi's paying tithes in Abraham's loins; and, thereupon, they were professedly inferior to him.

ii. That this comparison may be the more clear and evident, we must consider, that MELCHISEDEC WAS A TYPE OF CHRIST, UNDER A TWOFOLD RESPECT:

As he was in his own personal capacity.

As described to us in the Scripture.

For there is a great difference, as we shall see anon.

1. If we consider his *Personal Capacity,* so he was king and priest: he was really, in himself, so: he met Abraham, received tithes from him, and conferred a blessing upon him. But there are other things spoken of this Melchisedec in the sixth chapter, which to understand as really agreeing to the person of Melchisedec were utterly impossible: as, that he was *without father* or *mother,* or *without descent,* or *beginning* or *end of life;* as we have it in the third and eighth verses: and therefore some, considering that this description could not agree to any man, have fondly fancied that this Melchisedec was not true man; but was either Christ or the Holy Ghost, or some angel.

2. Therefore, we must note, that these things were spoken of Melchisedec, not as really he was in himself, but *as he is represented to us in the Scripture.* Therefore he is said to be "without father or mother," because the Scripture mentions nothing of them; records nothing of his parentage or pedigree, nothing of his birth or death, but is purposely silent in these things: v. 3; that he might be *made like unto the Son of God.* The Scripture is purposely silent concerning the pedigree of Melchisedec, and the beginning and ending of his days, that he might be a more lively type of the Son of God; who himself, in his divine nature, was without beginning or end of days. So that, though truly and really Melchisedec was a man, born of parents by a long descent from Adam, whose life had a date both when it begun and when it ended; yet it is truly said that he was without these, because they are not mentioned and recorded in the Scripture. Now among these high privileges and prerogatives, Melchisedec doth typify the priesthood of Christ better than the Aaronical priests could typify him; for he is one, that *abideth* and continueth *a priest:* v. 3; and *he liveth,* as in the eighth verse. The Scripture speaks nothing, either of his laying down his office or his life.

Now, in this, he is an eminent and conspicuous type of Christ, our High-Priest. For,

(1) He hath not laid down his life, so as to lose it: for he was made "after the power of the endless life;" as v. 16.

(2) Nor hath he laid down his Priesthood, so as not to exercise it: for he is "a priest forever;" and, "because he continueth forever," therefore he "hath an unchangeable priesthood;" as in v. 24.

The words of the text are a most comfortable inference, drawn

from all this discourse concerning the eternity of Melchisedec's priesthood: the eternity of it, I say; because the Scripture speaks nothing of the cessation of it. So that my text is a comfortable inference: Christ "is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him; seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Doth Christ forever live, and forever sit at the right hand of God? doth he continually lay open his wounds, repeat over his sufferings, plead his death and merits, claim a right to a sure purchase? is he continually perfuming heaven with the odor of that sweet incense, which he daily offers up with prayers for all the saints? Believe it, such a Sacrifice must needs be acceptable: such an Advocate must needs be prevalent: such a Saviour must needs be all-sufficient. "Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him; seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

II. In these WORDS we have,

A position couched under a supposition. The supposition is this: If so be Christ shall ever live to make intercession for the saints. The position is: That Christ doth live forever to make intercession, &c., which the Apostle before proves: He is *a High-Priest forever.*

There is an inference or corollary drawn from it: Therefore "he is able to save them to the uttermost," &c.

FIRST. In the position observe these two things:

First. The eternity of the life of Christ in the highest heaven.

Secondly. The eternity of his priestly office.

The former is this: "He liveth forever." The latter is, And he liveth for this very end, "to make intercession" for us.

SECONDLY. In the inference we may observe,

First. The truth inferred and asserted: "He is able to save."

Secondly. The measure and degree of this salvation: and that is, "to the uttermost," to all ends and perfections: he is able to save to all perfections; that is, altogether.

Thirdly. The persons, whom he is able thus perfectly to save: and they are those only, that "come unto God by him." And these are described,

*First.* By their obedience: They "come unto God;" that is, they perform service, obedience, and duty to God.

*Secondly.* By their faith: They "come unto God *by him*;" that is, by Christ.

All the duties and services which they perform, they tender up

by faith in Christ, and by Christ to God: They "come unto God by him."

THIRDLY. And, besides all these, here is a connexion of the inference and the position together, by the word *wherefore:* "Wherefore he is able to save," &c. In the connexion we have also the number of those, for whom Christ makes intercession: not for all men, but for those, "that come unto God through him."

Oh, what a rich vein of Scripture is before our eyes, which lies as an inestimable and unsearchable treasure in golden mines! Though I may seem to have but broken and crumbled the words, yet there is abundance of preciousness in every part and parcel of them. I shall not now stand to raise and insist upon all those observations, that might pertinently and properly be made from the words thus divided; but shall briefly speak to some few.

i. From the TRUTH inferred, *He is able to save to the uttermost,* observe,

Doct. I. That JESUS CHRIST IS AN ALMIGHTY AND ALL-SUFFICIENT SAVIOUR.

He is a High-Priest and a Saviour all-sufficient:

1. By *his Father's eternal designation:* Ps. lxxxix. 19, "I have laid help upon one that is mighty," &c.

2. By *his own voluntary susception and undertaking for us:* Ps. xl. 7, 8, "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of thy book it is written of me.....to do thy will, O my God." And the Apostle quotes it in Heb. x. 7.

3. By *the infinite glory and excellency of the divine nature:* which hath a double influence to make him an all-sufficient Saviour.

(1) It puts an infinite worth and value upon his sacrifice; and so hath made his offering acceptable, and a full price and ransom for sinners. It is called the blood of God: Acts xx. 28, "Feed the flock of God.....which he hath purchased with his own blood." And, certainly, the blood of God must needs be an all-sufficient expiation for the sin of man.

(2) It gave Christ a power and an ability, to appease and satisfy infinite justice and wrath; and to break the chains of death, and the bars of the grave, under which he had been detained, else our salvation had been a thing desperate and deplorable: but, herein, is he manifested to be the Son of God and Saviour of the world, even with power, in that he died and rose again.

4. He is an all-sufficient Saviour by *his human capacity.* As he would not have been able to save us, unless he had been God; so he would not have been capable to save us, unless he had been man.

Now Christ's humanity hath a twofold influence into the work of our redemption.

(1) In that, thereby, that person, who is God, became passive; and a fit subject to receive and bear the wrath of God.

(2) Hereby satisfaction is made to offended justice, in the same nature, which transgressed and offended. "By man came death; and by the man Jesus Christ came the resurrection from the dead:" 1 Cor. xv. 21. And therefore Christ saith, "a body hast thou prepared me:" Heb. x. 5. To what end? The Apostle tells us, "that, through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Both natures are here required: his human nature, without which he could not suffer death; and the Divine nature, without which he could not destroy him who had the power of death.

5. He became an all-sufficient Saviour, by *the overflowing and immeasurable unction of the Holy Ghost.*

Thus, Isa. lxi. 1, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings," &c. John iii. 34, "God gave not his Spirit in measure unto him;" yea, "the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily in him:" Col. ii. 9, and all this was on purpose to furnish him with gifts and graces, suitable to the discharge of the great work of his mediatorship. Now, certainly, since he was by God the Father designed, and of his own self ready and willing, by his humanity capacitated, by his Divinity fortified, and by the unction of the Holy Spirit furnished to the work of our salvation, he must needs be an all-sufficient Saviour; "able to save to the uttermost, all that come unto God by him."

ii. In the next place, for the PERSONS whom Christ is thus enabled to save, they are described by their faith and obedience: They come to God by Christ. Observe,

Doct. II. That CHRIST HIMSELF, ALTHOUGH HE IS AN ALL-SUFFICIENT SAVIOUR, ABLE TO SAVE TO THE UTTERMOST, YET HE IS NOT ABLE TO SAVE THE DISOBEDIENT AND UNBELIEVERS.

He only saves those, "that come unto God by him."

Now this,

1. Is not *for want of merit or virtue in that sacrifice,* which our High-Priest hath once offered up: not for want of any value or preciousness in his blood, or sufficiency in his price; for there is intrinsic virtue enough in the blood of Christ to save the whole world.

2. Nor is it *from any natural dependance, that salvation hath upon faith and obedience;* for God was free, and might have disposed of the eternal inheritance upon other terms. But,

3. It was only *upon the ordination and appointment of God,* who hath instituted the way of salvation to be by the death of Christ, who hath appointed the virtue of his death to be applied to us only by the grace of faith; which faith, without obedience and good works, is in itself dead, and can neither justify nor save us. So, then, without faith and obedience Christ cannot save us: because that virtue, whereby he should save us, cannot without these reach us; faith being the conveyance of the virtue of Christ's merits to the soul.

That is the second proposition.

iii. The third and last shall be raised from the CONNEXION of both parts of the text put together. Therefore "he is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him;" because "he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Observe from hence.

Doct. III. That THE TRUE GROUND AND REASON OF CHRIST'S ALL-SUFFICIENCY TO SAVE SINNERS, IS LAID UPON THE PREVALENCY OF HIS INTERCESSION FOR US.

And this, because it is the most comprehensive point, taking in both the former, is that, which I choose to insist upon.

In the prosecution of which doctrine, I shall speak concerning Christ's intercession.

His all-sufficiency to save, which depends upon and flows from it.

I. Concerning CHRIST'S INTERCESSION, I shall inquire into three things:

What it is, and wherein it doth consist.

What the extent and latitude of it is.

What are the benefits, that do redound to believers by it.

i. For the opening WHAT IT IS, we must know, that intercession is a law term, borrowed from courts of judicature; and signifies the action of a proxy or attorney, either in suing out the rights of his client, or answering the cavils and objections brought against him by the plaintiff.

Thus doth Christ for believers. He appears for them: Heb. ix. 24. He is entered "into heaven," appearing "in the presence of God for us." Nay, he doth, in some sense, carry believers into heaven with him, and there set them before his Father's throne; as we have it, Eph. ii. 6; "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Even as the high-priest did bear the names of the twelve tribes upon his breast, when he entered into the holy of holies; so Christ, when he entered into heaven, bears upon his heart the names and persons of all his, and presents them before his Father. He hath taken their cause, and pleads it with God his Father; as the Apostle speaks: "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:" 1 John ii. 1.

This intercession is of three sorts.

1. *Charitative intercession.*

And, thus, one man is bound by the duty of charity and conscience to pray and intercede for another. And of this kind of intercession we have mention made, 1 Tim. ii. 1; "I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men:" that is intercession of mutual charity one for another.

2. There is an *adjutory intercession*, a helping intercession.

And, thus, the Holy Spirit makes intercession for believers: Rom. viii. 26, 27; "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered," &c. He makes intercession for us, because, by his holy inspirations, he makes those prayers and intercessions for us, which we make for ourselves. And this is an adjutory intercession. We are indigent, and see not our own wants, nor have we tongues to express them; and, withal, we are dull and heavy, and make not importunate supplications; and, therefore, God sends his Spirit into our hearts, to discover our necessities to us, to raise desires in us, and to put words into our mouths and teach us what to pray for, and how to pray as we ought.

3. There is *an official and authoritative intercession.* And this properly belongs to Christ.

And this may be considered under a twofold respect.

(1) His intercession, in his state of humiliation.

And this is in a congruity to that abased state, wherein, "with strong cries, and tears," and groans he made "supplications" to God: Heb. v. 7. Yea, when he was under the sharpest agonies; when he was bruised by God and broken by men, suffering the wrath of the one, and the wrongs of the other; when his own pains might have made his prayers selfish, or his enemies' malice might have made him revengeful: yet, even then, he forgets not to intercede for them: Luke xxiii. 34; "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Although he was made in "the form of a servant; despised and rejected of men" (Is. liii. 3); accursed of God (Gal. iii. 13); exposed to reproach and injuries; devoted to death: notwithstanding all this, his intercession was not at all regarded the less, or the less prevalent; but, even in this low estate and vile appearance, he prayed with majesty and authority, "Father, I will that that those whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory," &c., John xvii. 24.

(2) His intercession may be considered as performed on our behalf, in his state of glory and exaltation.

After his offering up of himself here upon earth as a sacrifice upon the cross, he entered into the most holy place; and there he prosecutes the same suit, which he here commenced: Rom. viii. 34; "It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again," who is ascended into heaven, where he continually "maketh intercession for us."

This glorious intercession of Christ doth principally consist in these following particulars, which I shall endeavor to illustrate and open.

[1] In his appearing in the court of heaven in both natures, as our Mediator and Advocate; ready to answer any charge laid in against us, or suing out any good thing that belongs to us.

Thus, when Joshua, the high-priest, stood before the angel in filthy garments, Zech. iii. 1; Satan stood at his right hand to accuse him: the accusation was true: the crime was manifest: now, here, the angel (that is, Jesus Christ) interposeth: he appears for us, saying, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan:" what though the garments be filthy, I will take them away: "I have caused" their "iniquity to pass from" them. And this may be for our abundant consolation: though Satan, by his accusations and temptation, stand continually at our right hand to resist us; yet Christ, in heaven, always

stands at the right-hand of God to plead for us and silence Satan. And this was typified to us, by the high-priest entering into the holy of holies, to make intercession for the people.

[2] Christ presents, as his own person, so likewise the persons of all his blessed ones throughout the world, of all believers and the elect ones, to God the Father.

And that, not only in the general or total sum, that they are so many thousands, for whom he obtained mercy, for whom he must obtain salvation; not only as the high-priest among the Jews, who only had the names of the twelve tribes engraven upon their breast-plates, but not the name of every particular person of those tribes: but Christ hath every particular saint's name engraven upon his breast, and makes mention of every particular saint in his intercession to his Father: He is "the good shepherd," John x. 14, that knows every one of his sheep "by name:" v. 3. Let the meanest Christian, who is so obscure that his name stands unknown upon earth, take comfort and rejoice in this, that his name is well known in heaven: Christ hath often spoken, and God hath often heard it. Yea, though Christ hath so many to hear, so many to relieve and gratify, yet let not the meanest, the most inconsiderable saint on earth think that he forgets him; for he knows him by name; and takes as much care and solicitude for his salvation, as if there were not a soul in the world to save besides him; making prayers for him, that his faith fail not, as Christ said to St. Peter: and what is said of him may be applied in truth to every believer: Luke xxii. 32.

[3] Christ's intercession consists in presenting the performances of his people unto God.

All the duties and services of all the saints on earth do only ascend to God, when as they are presented to him by Christ. For he is that angel, mentioned in Rev. viii. 3, "having a golden censer, with much incense, which he offers up with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar," &c. It was a true speech of him, John ix. 31, "God heareth not sinners:" and, therefore, he never heareth us, because we are sinners; but he always heareth his Son, who speaks over for us the same prayers that we have before spoken: and so he hears us, speaking by him; and he is well-pleased with those duties, that otherwise would be an abomination to him.

[4] Christ presents to God as our services, so also his own merits; and that as the full and equitable price of all the mercies for which he intercedes.

For Christ's intercession is not a bare begging of blessings, to be bestowed gratis upon us; but all his transactions in the court of heaven are in a way of satisfaction and purchase. Is sin to be pardoned? lo, here is the blood of propitiation and atonement. Is mercy to be procured? lo, here is the price of the purchase. All, that we receive through the intercession of Christ, is, at once, both the effect of free grace and bounty, and yet likewise the purchase of all-sufficiency and of a meritorious price. In respect of us, all is free: in respect of Christ's undertaking; without our pre-ordination, free, as to performance; without our premonition, free, in the effectual application of it to us. But, though all this is free grace, in respect of us; yet, in respect of Christ, it is the purchase of a full price, and cost him the laying aside of his own glory, the obscuring himself in a veil of flesh, and the assuming of a body to prepare him for the work of our redemption: it cost him the losing of his life, the shedding of his most precious blood to accomplish that redemption: 1 Cor. vi. 20; 1 Cor. vii. 23; "Ye are all bought with a price," &c. We are "not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold.....but with the precious blood of Christ:" 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. Now, as Christ once offered up himself upon the cross, so he continually offers up himself in intercession; and presents that blood to his Father, that he formerly shed for sinners: and, therefore, it is remarkable, that where Christ is called our "advocate," he is called likewise our "propitiation:" 1 John ii. 1, 2; "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is also the propitiation for our sins:" noting to us, that the validity of the intercession of Christ consists in the merits of his death and sufferings; which price, offered up as a propitiation unto God in his intercession, is for the sins of all those that believe.

[5] Christ also presents his will and desire to his Father, in his intercession: which, by virtue of his merits, is always heard and granted.

And this he doth, not in a supplicatory manner, but by authority; by the absolute dominion, which he hath over those mercies for which he intercedes: "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me, may be with me," &c. All authority is given to the Son: John v. 22. Therefore it is said, Rom. viii. 34, that he "is at the right-hand of God making intercession for us:" which phrases import, that all power, both in heaven and earth, is consigned over to Christ; and, therefore, his intercession at the right-hand of God is an intercession with authority; such an intercession as cannot, as shall not be denied.

So, then, in these five particulars, we may see wherein the intercession of Christ consists: in presenting his own person, and appearing in the court of heaven for us; in offering up our duties and services; in presenting his own merits, and likewise his sovereign and uncontrolable will to his Father: by all which we may rest abundantly secured, that all the good things, which we ask in his name and that he asks on our behalf, shall be certainly conferred upon us.

So much for the first thing propounded, what the intercession of Christ is, and wherein it doth consist.

II. Let us consider, according to the method proposed, this Intercession of Christ IN THE LATITUDE AND EXTENT OF IT.

I shall do this under a twofold respect:

In respect of the time, wherein it is made.

In respect of the persons, for whom it is prevalent.

1. Consider the intercession of Christ, *in respect of the time.*

And so we may take notice too, how he performed it before his assumption of flesh, and likewise how it shall be performed after the consummation of all things to all eternity.

(1) As to the former, observe, that though it be most eminently performed since the hypostatical union of both natures in the person of Christ; yet it was also effectually performed before his taking of our flesh upon him.

For, as now Christ intercedes upon the account of those sufferings, which he hath undergone in his body: so he interceded, and his intercession was prevalent, before he was made flesh; though the merit, which made that intercession prevalent, was wrought out in the flesh. Therefore we find, in the Old Testament, Christ interceding before he was God-Man, actually; but, as the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, he was afterwards to be made God-Man: Zech. i. 12; "The angel of the Lord (that is, Jesus Christ) answered and said, O Lord of Hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah," &c. Yea, the saints then alive made use of the name of Christ, in their prayers to God the Father: so you have it, Dan. ix. 17; "Now, therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, &c., and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake." So that hence you see, that Christ's intercession began in heaven, long before his abode here upon earth: yea, it was the very first part of the office of his mediatorship that he entered upon: Christ did nothing as mediator, till after the fall: and the first thing which he did as in

that relation, was interceding for fallen man; to keep him from death threatened, and to restore him to life which he had forfeited.

(2) Consider Christ's intercession, not only as performed from all eternity, but after the consummation of all things.

He intercedes for his Church, not only while militant on earth, but when triumphant in glory; "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." Christ is said to be "a priest forever:" Heb. vi. 20; and to have "an unchangeable priesthood," in the verse before the text. The priesthood of Christ hath two parts, oblation and intercession: his oblation was when he made his soul an offering for sin, and offered up himself as a sacrifice to God upon the altar of the cross: now this part of his priesthood is ceased, Heb. x. 14; ix. 26. By once offering up himself "he hath perfected forever, them that are sanctified," &c. Christ being a priest forever, and not being a priest any longer in respect of his oblation, it remains, that the eternity of his priesthood descends upon his intercession only; and, therefore, his intercession is eternal.

But, you may ask me, "What need shall we stand in of the intercession of Christ, when we are glorified with him; and what then shall he intercede for?"

To this I answer: The intercession of Christ is twofold, conciliatory and reconciliatory. The first is that, whereby mercy and all good things, both temporal, spiritual, and eternal, are effectually procured for us, and bestowed upon us: the other is that whereby pardon, justification, and atonement are freely conferred upon us. While we are upon the earth, we stand in need to receive the benefit of both these intercessions: for they are aptly suited to our twofold state, of wants and miseries, and of sin and imperfection. Our wants are supplied, by his conciliatory intercession; and our sins pardoned, by his reconciliatory intercession: and of both these we have absolute need while we live here in this vale of tears. But, accordingly as the church and people of God do out-grow the state of want and sin, so likewise these intercessions of Christ, our High-Priest, cease.

[1] Christ's reconciliatory intercession ever ceaseth in heaven, when he hath gathered together the number of his elect into one: for then they shall all be in a full, perfect, and sinless condition. We shall then never more offend God, never more be alienated and estranged from God by sin: and, when we are possessed of such a blessed state as this, there shall be no more need of a daysman, to make intercession and reconciliation for all distances; and enmity shall be utterly abolished. Therefore, Christ's intercession doth not last forever, as to this part which is reconciliatory.

[2] As for his consolatory intercession, whereby he obtains for us mercy and all good things, that is, those good things that are either temporal or spiritual, or that respect either this life or the future state of glory in heaven; the former part of this intercession of Christ shall likewise shortly cease, because this life itself shall shortly cease, and the saints themselves also: for, when all, that have been translated or that have died, shall be raised to a better life, all the wants which they do now sustain, a want of grace, or a want of peace, or a want of protection, or a want of provision, inward wants or outward worldly wants or evils, shall all cease there: and therefore the intercession of Christ, as it respects the mercies of this life, shall shortly cease.

Christ's intercession for future glory, is either for the substance of it or for the continuance of it.

As for the substance of their glory, Christ intercedes for that before he crowns them with it: John xvii. 24; "I will that those, whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." The beatifical vision is the very glory and happiness of the saints in heaven; and, when they are brought to behold this glory of Christ, this intercession ceaseth.

But, then, there is Christ's intercession for the continuance of their glory. And this is that intercession, which is everlasting; that intercession, which he ever liveth to make. As our Saviour Christ ever lives, so he ever makes intercession for the saints; that they may never be cut off from God's presence, nor fall from their happiness, nor forfeit their glorious inheritance: for, in heaven itself though we be there in a most perfect and sinless state, yet, were it not for the intercession of Christ whereby every moment he procures us a confirmation of that estate, we should have no more security of our continuance than the angels which fell, who were more holy and happy than ever we were; we should have no more confirmation than Adam had in paradise, who forfeited his happiness by the mutability of his own will. Therefore, I say, the continuance of the saints now in heaven depends upon the everlasting intercession of Jesus Christ.

Thus we have considered the extent of Christ's intercession, as to the time wherein he makes it; and that, before his incarnation, and likewise after the consummation of all things.

2. Let us now consider the extent of Christ's intercession *as to the Persons*, for whom he intercedes.

And that is for all his, in opposition to the world. We have

this plain in Christ's prayer on earth, which is the pattern and draught of his intercession in heaven: John xvii. 9; "I pray not for the world; but for them, which thou hast given me out of the world." I pray for them; those, that thou designest shall be brought to glory by my merits. Now, of these, some are yet in a state of nature; disobedient, impenitent, unbelievers: others are in a state of grace; actually converted and regenerated: Christ intercedes for both: for these latter he intercedes throughout the whole chapter. John xvii. 20; "Neither pray I for these alone, but for all those, that shall believe on me through their word:" many of which were then living, and received the benefits of Christ's intercession in their effectual vocation and conversion. For unbelievers, Christ prays that they may obtain grace; for believers, that they may obtain more grace, and through it be brought to glory.

And that is the second consideration in respect of the intercession of Christ, as to the latitude and extent of it, both as to the time and persons.

iii. Another thing propounded, is, to consider, the intercession of Christ, IN RESPECT OF THE BENEFITS THAT FLOW FROM IT: and those are very great and manifold blessings, worthy to be obtained by so great an advocate.

There are but two things, wherein the office of an advocate properly consists:

To defend his client from wrongs and injuries.

To procure good things for him.

The first he doth, by answering the accusations and exceptions, that are brought against him; and the latter he doth, by suing out his right and title. Both these the Lord Jesus Christ, our advocate, doth for us.

1. *He defends us from those evils, that our adversaries, by their accusations, would bring against us.*

As we are sinners, God's justice, our own consciences, and Satan's malice come in as our adversaries, and all lay their several charges against us. Justice calls for vengeance, Conscience thunders, Satan rages, and all accuse us. God calls to the bar. "Sinner, such and such a sin thou art guilty of, that deserves eternal damnation."—"True, Lord," saith Conscience: "I will witness the same against him, having warned him of it and checked him for it; but he hath fallen upon me, and wounded me, while I, in thy name, have given him these admonitions."—"True, Lord," saith the devil too: "All this he did upon my suggestions and temptations, therefore resign him over to me for punishment."

Now when the poor sinner stands mute and trembling, his mighty advocate pleads his cause; and silences all these accusations that are brought against him, and sets him right. And this he doth two ways.

(1) He doth it by reconciling God and conscience, through his own blood.

Which blood, as it is the blood of atonement, so it reconciles God and us; and, as it is the blood of sprinkling, so it reconciles our own consciences to us. As it is the blood of atonement, so we are reconciled to God, and God to us: Rom. v. 10. We are "reconciled to God by the death of his Son:" and it is that blood, which "speaketh better things" for us "than the blood of Abel;" for, as that cries to God for vengeance, so this cries louder for mercy and forgiveness. As it is the blood of sprinkling, so it reconciles our own consciences to us, and makes them at peace with us: Heb. x. 22; "Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, &c.:" an evil conscience, that is, an accusing and an affrighting conscience: it is said to be sprinkled, because the blood of Christ must first produce purity in our souls, before it can procure any well-grounded peace. That is the first particular, how Christ defends us from the accusations of our adversaries, by reconciling the justice of God and our own consciences to us.

(2) Our advocate defends us, as by reconciling God and our own consciences to us, so by stopping the mouth of the devil, who, because he can never be reconciled, therefore he must be silenced.

So we find that Christ stopped the mouth of that great accuser, Zech. iii. 2; "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord, that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee, &c." Thus our Lord Jesus Christ, by his powerful intercession, silenceth all the accusations that are brought against us, by the justice of God and our own consciences, reconciling them unto us, and stopping the mouth of our implacable adversary the devil; so that none of their accusations, though preferred against us, can prevail to our detriment or disadvantage. All this we have summarily collected together in Rom. viii. 33, 34; "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he, that condemneth? It is Christ, that died; yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right-hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

This is the first great benefit, which we receive from the intercession of Christ; he defends us from those evils, which our adversaries, through their accusations, endeavor to bring upon us and prefer against us.

2. I now come to speak of those *good things, which, by Christ's merits we have a right and title to.*

And innumerable are the benefits, that redound to believers by the intercession of Christ.

If you inquire what they are, I answer,

(1) In general, the whole work of our salvation depends, as well upon the life and intercession of Christ, as upon his death and sufferings.

Though this may seem strange possibly to those, who are wont to hear our salvation ascribed only to the death and sufferings of Christ; yet it evidently appears from Scripture, that our salvation and all the benefits we are to receive and expect do as much flow from the virtues of his glorious life and intercession, as from the merits of his death and passion.

There are two things requisite, before any good thing can become ours.

A meritorious procurement or purchase of the thing itself.

An actual and effectual application of it to us.

Now the purchase is made by his death and sufferings; but the effectual application of them is by his life and intercession. By the former, the mercies are purchased: by the latter, the purchase is enjoyed. Therefore, if Christ had only died, and not risen again, and overcome and triumphed over death in his own empire, and triumphed over the grave as in his own territories, his undertakings had redounded to his own disappointment, but not at all to our salvation: but, herein, saith the Apostle, doth he declare himself, "to be the Son of God with power.....by his resurrection from the dead:" Rom. i. 4, our hopes of salvation had been all buried in the same grave with him, but that which he died to purchase he lives to bestow: for "he ever liveth to make intercession."

There was no one prejudice, that hindered the gospel so much from taking place in the hearts of the heathens in the primitive times, as the death and cross of Christ; for they believed that he was lifted up upon the cross: but would not believe, that he was raised from the grave. Their natural reason herein taught them this inference, that, to expect life from Christ, was to hope for it from him, that could not preserve his own, or restore it again after the loss of it.

It is true, it seems to natural reason, to be folly thus to hope for life from a dead person: were it not that his life applied what his death purchased; and our salvation, which was begun on the cross, is perfected on the throne. And therefore we have it in Acts ii. 24,

God raised him from the grave, because it was impossible that he should be held of it.

"Why was it not possible that Christ should be held of the grave?" I answer, upon these two accounts.

One impossibility was in regard of his person; another, in regard of his office: for, as he was man, so he abhorred death, and a separation from his body; and, as he was God, so he was able to reunite them, to overcome death, and burst asunder the bars of the grave: so that, as man having a desire to live, and as God having power to live, it was impossible for him to be detained prisoner in the grave.

But this is not all: there is another impossibility in regard of his office. He was appointed to redeem lost man, to rescue him from eternal death: and therefore it was impossible for him to be kept under the power of any temporal death, because this could not be done while he lay under a restraint of the grave: his death would have been but a dead thing to us, without his resurrection: it was his life, that put virtue into his death.

The obedience of Christ hath a twofold virtue.

As it is a satisfaction to offended justice.

As it is a purchase of forfeited mercy.

Both these become benefits to us, by Christ's life and intercession.

[1] His satisfaction to offended justice, whereby we are reconciled to God and God to us, that satisfaction which was purchased and procured by his death, becomes beneficial to us by his life.

So we have it, Rom. v. 10; "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." But the actual application of this is by his life: therefore it follows, in the same place, "much more shall we be saved by his life." We were fully reconciled by his death, in respect of merit; but we are much more reconciled by his life, in respect of the effectual application of that merit to us.

[2] Christ purchased those blessings and mercies, which we had forfeited; and they are made effectual and beneficial to us by his life.

There are three great and principal mercies, which Christ purchased for us: justification and pardon, sanctification or holiness, and the future inheritance of life and glory. These three become effectual to us by Christ's life.

1st. Justification and the pardon of our sins become effectual and beneficial to us by the life of Christ.

Rom. iv. 25. He "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." If he had not risen from the dead, he himself could not be justified; much less could we be justified by him. And, therefore saith the Apostle, 1 Tim. iii. 16; "And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, &c.," that is, he was "manifested in the flesh," in his incarnation: he was "seen of angels," in his glorious ascension: but he was "justified in the Spirit," in his resurrection. Had he never been raised from the dead by his Spirit, that is, by the almighty power of the divine nature, he had not been declared just, nor could he ever have justified us.

2dly. Sanctification and holiness is the powerful effect of the life of Christ, though it was the purchase of his death.

Therefore saith the Apostle, Phil. iii. 10; "That ye may know him, and the power of his resurrection;" that is, that power, which, through his resurrection, he doth apply to us, and by which he raiseth us up also to newness of life. And this he calls our being "planted together in the likeness of his resurrection:" Rom. vi. 5; "For, if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurection."

3dly. Our future inheritance of life and glory, is likewise ascribed to the life of Christ, though it was purchased by his death.

John xiv. 19; "Because I live, ye shall live also:" that is, because I live eternally in heaven, ye shall live eternally in heaven, also.

So then, in the general, you see that there is no benefit redounding to believers by the death of Christ, but the same doth redound to them likewise by the life of Christ: which life is ever employed in the work of intercession: "He ever liveth to make intercession" for us. See what the Apostle saith: "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord: and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." It might happily be inverted to us: Whether the Lord lives, he lives for us; or, whether he dies, he dies for us; and, whether the Lord lives or dies, it is for our advantage.

But this is only in the general; and, therefore,

(2) To come and descend to particulars: there are very many great benefits, that do redound to believers by the life and intercession of Christ.

[1] Hence we obtain the mystical union, by which we are united both to God and to one another.

John xvii. 21; Christ prays, that his saints "may be all one; as

thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee." And from this union flows all that fellowship and communion, which they have either with God or with one another: their communion with God depends upon their being united to him in the sameness of spirit; and their communion among themselves depends upon their mutual union in the same body; and both depend upon this prayer of Christ.

[2] The inestimable gift of the Holy Ghost, likewise, is the benefit of Christ's intercession.

John xvi. 7; "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you:" so, John xiv. 16, 17; "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you forever." All the motions, breathings, evidences, and supports of the Holy Spirit which you enjoy, as they were the purchase of Christ's death, so also are they benefits obtained by his life and intercession for us. Hence also was it, that, in the first age of the Church, there were those extraordinary and miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost; the gifts of tongues and healing, &c. Acts iii. 33.

[3] Through this intercession, we have boldness and confidence at the throne of grace.

Heb. iv. 14, 15; "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God.....let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Eph. iii. 12; "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence through the faith of him." Who would not be encouraged to go boldly to God, that hath an advocate to plead for him, that never yet had the least denial?

[4] Hence, also, we receive all our strength and growth in grace.

John xvii. 17; "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." Grace, together with all the measures and degrees of it, is derived to us, as from Christ's fulness, so by his intercession: it is received by our prayers, and conveyed to us by his prayer.

[5] Hence we obtain, likewise, perseverance and continuance in grace.

John xvii. 11; "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me." "I have prayed," saith Christ to Peter, "that thy faith fail not:" and, upon this incense of Christ's prayer, is built the perseverance of the saints in grace.

[6] Hence, likewise, we are preserved both against temptation; and, from sin, when under temptation.

John xvii. 15; "I pray.....that thou shouldst keep them from the

evil:" that is, from the evil of temptation, so that Satan never come near us; or, from the evil to which he tempts us, so that though he assault us he may never prevail: that we may be either free from temptation, or at least victorious over it. So, Luke x. 17. The devil is bound up by this almighty prayer: and, though there be no saint on earth, that enjoys perfect freedom either from sin or temptations to sin; yet these temptations would be much more frequent, and always prevalent over us, did not Christ's prayer interpose by mighty force and strength, and beat back Satan's fiery darts that they cannot reach us, or rebate their force and sharpness that they cannot hurt us.

[7] From Christ's intercession we, likewise, do obtain acceptation of all our duties.

He sees the iniquity of our holy things, and cleanses us from all the imperfections, corruption, and sinfulness, that adhere to them: even by that incense, that he offers up with the prayers of all the saints, he makes them acceptable and a sweet savor to God the Father. Not that the incense of the intercession of Christ casts a mist before God, that he should not discern the faults and infirmities of our best services: yea, he clearly sees them, and fully knows them; yet those performances, which in themselves were abominable and sinful, through the perfume of his incense become a sweet savor to God, and he accepts of them with as much complacency and delight as he doth of the perfect services of the angels themselves.

[8] From the intercession of Christ we receive the benefit of the Spirit's making intercession for us in our hearts; with prayer for us, that we, through the Spirit, may be enabled to pray again.

All our prayers are, indeed, but the echoing back of his own Spirit: Gal. iv. 6; "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father." The Holy Ghost is here called "the Spirit of his Son," because Christ hath purchased Him for his by his death, and sent Him into the hearts of his by his authority and commission.

Thus you see there are sundry great benefits and privileges, which we receive by the life and intercession of Christ in heaven.

But you may say, "Doth Christ's intercession always prevail? Is he never denied? And may we be certain to obtain all these benefits by him?"

I answer, we may: and this certainty is grounded upon three things.

First. In that the Father always hears and grants him all his

desires: John xi. 41, 42; "I know that thou hearest me always." He is the well-beloved Son of God; and, therefore, as we are bid by that heavenly voice, Mat. xvii. 5, to hear him, in all his commands; so will his Father hear him, in all his requests.

Secondly. The Father himself loves us; and is willing and ready to give forth those good things to us, of which we stand in need. So we have it, John xvi. 26, 27; "I say not.....that I will pray the Father for you:" you may be fully assured I will; and, therefore, whatsoever I ask shall be granted: "for the Father..... loveth you," and will deny me no request that is for your good.

Thirdly. That all these benefits are at the command and disposal of Christ himself: and, therefore, as he intercedes that these benefits may be bestowed upon us, so he himself will bestow them; for they are at his command, and under his authority: Mat. xxviii. 18; "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth:" and therefore all these things shall certainly be conferred upon you in due time and order, through the prevalence of the intercession of Christ.

Thus I have cursorily run over these things, which might have been much dilated upon, because I will hasten to that which is more practical.

Thus much for that position, That Christ "ever liveth to make intercession for us."

II. The next thing, that remains to be treated of, is the inference deduced and drawn from the position: Therefore, "he is able to save to the uttermost those that come unto God by him:" from which I shall handle CHRIST'S ALL-SUFFICIENCY TO SAVE; and, therein, labor to set forth the freeness and fulness of divine grace in the salvation of sinners.

In order whereunto I have already showed you, that Christ was made thus an all-sufficient Saviour, by the Father's designation, and his own voluntary susception; by the capacity of his human nature, fitting him to receive wrath; by the power of the divine nature, enabling him to reluctate it; and by an immeasurable unction of the Holy Ghost, furnishing him with all endowments requisite to perfect our redemption.

Christ, being thus every way qualified for this great work, is made all-sufficient to save; and his all-sufficiency to save will appear in these following particulars.

i. IN THE GREATNESS OF THE NUMBER AND THE HEINOUSNESS OF THE NATURE OF THOSE SINS, FROM WHICH HE IS ABLE TO DELIVER.

Though your sins be as many as the sands, and as great as the mountains, swelled up with fearful aggravations that make them out of measure sinful; yet he can say to the mountains, "Be removed, and cast into the bottom of the sea," even the red sea of his own blood; and it shall be done. This was prefigured by the scape-goat, Lev. xvi. 21, upon which the iniquities of all the children of Israel were laid, that he might carry them into the land of forgetfulness. And, as the scape-goat, so the paschal-lamb represented Christ, and his all-sufficiency to save: and therefore we have that speech of John the Baptist, John i. 29; "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Yea, this was alluded to by the imposition of his name: Mat. i. 21; "Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins."

There are two things in sin, from which we stand in need to be saved.

From its pollution; which, of itself, is enough to exclude us from heaven, into which no unclean thing shall ever enter.

From its condemnation; by which we are excluded from heaven, and adjudged to hell.

From both these, he is able to save to the very uttermost.

1. Christ is able to save you *from the pollution and defilement of your foulest lusts and sins;* and that, "by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost:" Tit. iii. 5.

Those spots of defilement, that have so polluted and stained your consciences, that no tears, though your eyes were turned into ever-running streams, would ever be able to wash out, yet the sprinkling of the blood of Christ can. It can purge the heart and conscience "from dead works:" Heb. ix. 14, and change the scarlet and crimson complexion of it into whiteness and purity. There is no sinner here this day, though his heart be as foul and black as hell, though his life swarm with abominable lusts of all sorts, yet, Christ, by his Almighty Spirit and efficacious grace, can in an instant transform and new mould him; and, of a desperate and outrageous sinner, make him an humble and broken-hearted saint. See that black catalogue, 1 Cor. vi. 9—11; "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers.....nor thieves.....nor drunkards.....shall inherit the kingdom of God." What saith the Apostle concerning such? "Such were some of you:" why, is it

possible that grace should change, or mercy pardon, or the devil lose such great sinners as these are? Yet, "such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified.....in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

Yea, and this all-sufficiency of Christ to save and sanctify the vilest and most flagitious sinner, is made more eminently glorious in these particulars.

(1) In that he is able to effect this mighty change in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, without waiting upon the methods of previous preparations or dispositions.

The Spirit doth not always stand knocking by common motions, persuasions, and convictions, and legal terrors: but, sometimes, forceth and breaketh open the heart; and, by his irresistible efficacy, suddenly surpriseth the soul, and seizeth on it, and captivateth it to the obedience of the Lord Christ. As, at mid-day, when we remove the shutters of our windows, light doth not enter in by degrees, first dawning and darting in some weak beams of light, and then some further degrees; but it springs in at once, and at one moment, irradiates and enlightens the room with a perfect and full-grown brightness: so, sometimes, the Sun of Righteousness doth arise upon the heart, without the circumstances of a dawning; though this is not, indeed, God's usual method in converting sinners. Nay, sometimes, it darts both light and warmth, at once, through the whole heart; by which our Almighty Saviour can, in a moment, work a greater change by far, than God wrought in all the six days' creation . he can, at once, melt down the hard heart and subdue the stubborn will, tame headstrong passions and violent affections, and demolish the strong-holds of iniquity that have many years been fortifying against him: he can both wound and heal, kill and make alive, destroy sin and plant grace; and that, with such dispatch, as can prevent, not only the endeavors, but the observation of a sinner.

(2) The all-sufficiency of Christ to save and sanctify appears in this also, that sometimes he works this mighty change at such an unlikely season; when the sinner is the hottest and the most eager in the prosecution of his lust.

It is easy to show, by some remarkable instances, what he is able to do, by converting a sinner to himself, not only without preparations to assist him, but against the strongest preparations that the sinner and the devil have made to resist him. Some have been surprised by grace in the very act of sin, that might have provoked justice to have damned them: mercy hath made it an

opportunity for their salvation: some circumstances in their sin have proved to be the beginning of their conversion. Thus St. Paul, in the midst of his threatening, in the height and heat of his persecutions, when he was going to Damascus, to hale and imprison those that made profession of the name of Christ, was, by the almighty grace of Christ, turned to be an apostle. And so, in Isa. lvii. 18. Notwithstanding that he goes on to add sin to sin and iniquity to iniquity, "I have seen his ways," saith God, "and I will heal him:" by my efficacious and Almighty grace breaking in upon him in a moment.

(3) Christ's all-sufficiency to sanctify and save a sinner appears to be eminently glorious, in that he is able to work this great and mighty change by such contemptible means, as, to the eye of human reason, is altogether insufficient to achieve it; and that is, by the preaching of the word.

Should God himself speak out of heaven in thunder; should we hear the voice of his terrible majesty in the clouds, "Repent, repent, or eternally perish;" should some angel, that is now ministering among us, make himself visible, and from this place denounce wrath and vengeance against impenitent sinners, and promise peace and pardon to all that shall believe, repent, and reform their lives; should some damned wretch be released out of hell, and sent hither on purpose to warn you to repent, or for ever to be swallowed up in fiery wrath, if you should see him speaking flames at every word, this were a likely course to move you: for who would be so senseless and obdurate, as not to be convinced at such a sermon as this? But know, that God hath committed the word of reconciliation not unto them, but unto us, "earthen vessels" as we are. And yet, alas! what can we do? we can but stammer out a few words, that are soon lost, that are soon scattered: we can but reprove men for their sins, threaten them with wrath, admonish them to fly to Jesus Christ for his righteousness, and beseech them through him to be reconciled to God. Now, that this should be of such force as to persuade conscience, to break the heart, to ransack the bowels, even of those very sinners, who perhaps came with prejudices, contempt, and scorn; what is this, but a plain and evident demonstration of the almighty power of God, who, "by the foolishness of preaching, saveth those that do believe;" thereby convincing the world that there is nothing so weak and contemptible, but God can by it bring to pass things wonderful and miraculous.

That is the first thing, whereby it doth appear, that Christ is

all-sufficient to save sinners: the greatness of the number, the heinousness of the nature, and the pollution of those sins, from which he is able to deliver; as I have showed in these three particulars.

2. Christ is able to save, not only from the pollution of the foulest, but *from the guilt and condemnation of the greatest sins;* and that, by a free pardon and remission of them.

What greater sins than blasphemy and persecution? yet, saith St. Paul concerning himself, 1 Tim. i. 13; "I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor.....but I obtained mercy." Therefore, we cannot say with Cain, as the marginal note renders it, "My iniquity is greater than can be forgiven:" I have out-sinned mercy; and there is nothing remains for me, but the fearful expectation of the fiery indignation, which will certainly devour me." Is not that blood of infinite value, which God shed for thee? Hath not this all-sufficient Saviour borne the whole wrath which thou shouldst have borne? Hath he not "brought life and immortality to light;" and wilt thou be so injurious as to think thy sins more vile, than his blood is precious? or, that there is more venom in them to destroy thee, than there is virtue in his blood to save thee? Let not the devil persuade thee, before the commission of thy sins, that they are so little, that they need no pardon; nor, after the commission of them, that they are so heinous, that they cannot be pardoned. Man is in nothing more provoking to God, than when he believes that his sins cannot be pardoned.

There are but two sins which are unpardonable. The one, is the dreadful sin against the Holy Ghost; and the other is final unbelief. Final unbelief cannot be pardoned, because the death of Christ, by which all pardon is obtained, can be applied to the soul by no other means than faith. The sin against the Holy Ghost cannot be pardoned, because it is a malicious rejection of the blood of Christ, and all pardon by it.

Hast thou reason to think thyself guilty of either of these sins?

Thou canst not say thou art guilty of final unbelief; for that cannot be, until the last moment of thy life.

But that, which most of all troubles the despairing soul, is, lest it hath committed the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost. And this many are afflicted with; this they fear; and so, in the extreme anguish and horror of their souls, they cry out that they are lost, that they are damned, that there is no hope, no pardon for them. If it be so indeed, that there is no pardon for thee; yet this outcry confutes itself: for the sin against the Holy Ghost is,

of all others, the least jealous and suspicious. I am persuaded, that the consideration of the nature of this sin will persuade us that there is no man guilty of it, but he, that is also given up by God to a reprobate mind and a seared conscience, and so grown quite past feeling as never to complain of his miserable condition.

Thy very troubles, therefore, thy very despairing thoughts, show that thou hast no reason to despair, and that thy sins are not unpardonable: and, therefore, be what they will, the deformity of them never so ugly, the guilt of them as ghastly as thy guilty conscience represents them, yet there is an all-sufficiency in Christ to save thee fully.

Is it the numberless number of them, that affrights thee? Were they yet more, Christ can save thee from them: 1 John i. 7; "The blood of.....Christ.....cleanseth from all sin." Dost thou complain, O soul, that thy sins are as many in number as the sand upon the seashore? yea, but dost thou not know likewise, that the sea can cover the sands? so the overflowing blood of Christ can reach the uttermost borders and extent of all thy sins; and keep them from the sight of God, that they shall never more appear.

Is it the greatness and the heinous nature of thy sins, that afflict thee? Possibly thou mightst think I flatter thee, to tell thee thou shouldst gather ground of hope rather than of despair: for thou hast now a plea for pardon. See how the prophet David urgeth this as an argument with God, for the forgiveness of them: "For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity:" why? It may be they are so great, that they cannot in justice be pardoned: Yea, "O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, *for it is great.*" It is a very strange argument, one would think, thus to plead with men: "Pray pardon me, because I have done you a great injury:" and yet, with God, whose thoughts are not as the thoughts of men, and whose ways are not as the ways of men, this strange argument is very forcible and prevalent: "Lord, pardon me, because I have sinned greatly:" thou speakest more reason by far, than if thou shouldst say, thy sins are great and heinous, and therefore there is no hope of pardon for them.

3. Now *Christ's all-sufficiency to save the greatest and the worst of sinners appears in these following particulars.*

(1) In that he is able to save the *oldest* and most *accustomed sinner;* and to make the last hour of his life the first of his eternal happiness.

And, in this, if in any thing, the Almighty power of Christ to save is made most wonderfully glorious. When an old sinner,

that hath trudged on apace to destruction, and hath arrived even at the very brink of hell, when there were but a few steps between him and eternal death, nay when he stuck there, and there was nothing to recover him, for Christ then to give him a lift over that vast gulf, and then give him another lift over to everlasting life, what can be said in this case, but what the Psalmist saith in Ps. lxxxix. 13, "Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand?" Such a man's condition is very sad and dangerous: and, if anything were too hard for all-sufficiency to achieve, it were altogether desperate.

Now there are several things, which advance the power of Christ in saving old sinners. As,

[1] That the devil's possession of an old, overgrown sinner is mightily confirmed both in strength and title.

In strength; in that he hath had time to fortify every strong-hold of iniquity, and to make them impregnable. In title; because, through long possession, the devil pleads right by prescription, and time out of mind over the soul, so that it seems almost a vain attempt to rescue that soul from sin: and, though all things were made by and for God, yet here you see God's title seems as it were to fail, and the devil's takes place; for, by a long custom in sin, such outstand the offers of grace, abuse the patience of God, and provoke him to give them up judicially to hardness of heart; by long delay, they more strengthen the devil's title, and make their salvation the more difficult and hazardous.

[2] Old sinners are so soaked and drenched in the cares and concernments of this world, that, by a strange sottishness, the nearer they approach to the evil day, the further they put it off from them; never thinking of eternity, until they are irrecoverably swallowed up in it.

As those, that work in deep mines, see not the sun, and know not how the day passeth away: so those earth-worms, that toil and drudge to load themselves with thick clay out of the bowels of the earth, never consider how far their day is spent, nor how near their sun is to setting: never consider once how the day goes over their heads, but still work deeper and deeper till they have opened a passage through earth into hell, into which at last they fall headlong.

[3] Old sinners have long built up and supported themselves with false and flattering hopes.

Either presumptuous conceits of God's mercy, or proud conceits of their own merits, or some such rotten principle or other: and, because, with these, they have worn out many storms of conscience

and many powerful convictions, they will not forsake their hopes, nor let go their vain confidence; but cry out peace, peace to themselves, till they and their hopes perish together.

[4] By a long course of sinning incorrigibly, they have wearied out Divine patience, and all the strivings of the Blessed Spirit of God; till, at last, they have provoked the Lord to pronounce a curse and a judicial hardness upon these old sinners.

And, because they would not be purged when he would have purged them, therefore they shall never be purged from their iniquities, till wrath seizes upon them, and seals them, and sets them aside for the devil.

The condition, therefore, of old sinners is very dangerous and deplorable, and very seldom are such converted and saved.

But, yet, this is not the cause: the oldness or customariness of their sins makes them not unpardonable, nor sets them out of the reach of Christ's all-sufficiency to save: but, because they are so rough and stubborn, that they will not come to God through Christ, that they may be saved by him. Yet, notwithstanding their case is thus forlorn and desperate, the all-sufficiency of Christ may be extended unto such as these, to bring them to salvation, and to cure and heal them, and save them from those sins that would deprive them of it.

Poor sinners! did you never read that Christ stanched an issue of blood that had run twelve years? Mark v. 25; and how he straightened a woman that was bowed together eighteen years? yea, how he healed an impotent man, that had an infirmity thirty-eight years? John v. 5. And shall a miracle of power be able to cure an old disease, and not a miracle of grace be able to cure an old sinner? Though your bloody issue of sin hath run long; though you have lain bound under sin not seventeen or eighteen, but perhaps eighty years; yet come, though it be in the last hour of the day. Though your sins are as old, yet they are not so old as those mercies that are everlasting. You are not too old for grace, nor too old to be new-born. Lazarus riseth again, though he had lain four days in the grave; and the same hand, that raised him can raise you from the power of the devil, though you have lain there not four days, but fourscore years, dead in sin and trespasses. The thief on the cross, Christ saved, not many hours before his death: as though Christ would show the world, by this example what he can do in a desperate case. And could he thus save, when he suffered; and cannot he much more save, now he is glorified and triumphant? Old houses, many times, are repaired and

made meet habitations again: so you, though you have been an old tenement for the devil, may be so repaired by grace as to become a temple for the Holy Ghost. Be persuaded, therefore, yet at length to accept of the tenders of an all-sufficient Saviour. Your day is almost spent, and your life stands upon the brink of the grave: if you now neglect so great salvation, as the Lord Jesus in the Gospel proffers to you, your death may be so soon as to prevent another offer of him to you; but it shall not, nay it cannot be so soon, as to prevent salvation by Christ, if you accept of this offer.

(2) Christ is able to save those, who have *frequently relapsed* into the commission of the same sin.

This is that, I know, which galls and stings the consciences of many sinners. It is not so much the multitude of their sins that affrights them, as the frequent commission of the same sins. "Oh," saith one: "I am guilty of reiterated and oft-repeated sins. I have committed the same sin, again and again; notwithstanding I have been convinced of it; notwithstanding I have prayed, resolved and vowed against it. Notwithstanding all the convictions and overtures which I have had, and notwithstanding all the resolutions which I have made, I have again relapsed into the same sins; and those, not of ordinary infirmity and human frailty, but sins of a gross and scandalous nature. And are such sins pardonable?"

I answer: These relapses, although they are very dangerous, yet they are not altogether incurable. It is hard, to soften a heart, that is treacherous to God and to itself, and very deeply engaged in some particular lust; when we are frequently overcome by the same corruption, by the same temptation, but, yet, this is not such an aggravation, as should leave our sins unpardonable, or us desperate. The Jews, indeed, have a tradition among them, that the fourth relapse into the same sin makes it an unpardonable offence; but we know that the mercy of God and the infinite merit of Christ, are not stinted by any number of sins, nor by any number of the same sins. It is not with us as with drowning men, that if they sink the fourth time they never rise again. Certainly, that Christ, who bids us to forgive our brother, though he should offend us to "seventy time seven" offences, and hath not excepted reiterated provocations, will, upon our repentance, so much oftener forgive us, as his great mercy is above our charity. Though we have committed those sins and provocations against himself; though it be matter of bitter and deep humiliation, that any corruption should be so prevalent as frequently to overcome us, and that notwith-

standing conviction, contrition, and heart-breaking confession: yet it is no cause of despair of mercy. The grace of Christ can subdue such rooted sinners as these. And what sins soever the grace of Christ can subdue, the mercy of God can pardon.

(3) Christ can save the profoundest and most notorious *backslider.*

And backsliding is the greatest obstruction to a sinner's hope. This is that, which fills him with fears and terrors: "Oh, I have been guilty of apostacy. I have 'tasted' of the sweetness 'of the heavenly gift, and of the powers of the world to come:' yet I have fallen back to my carnal temper, from the holy ways of God; and have again backslided and wallowed in my former pollutions, from which I seemed sometimes to be cleansed and refined. And is this apostacy pardonable?"

I answer: There is indeed an unpardonable apostacy, described in that dreadful place, Heb. vi. 4, 6; it is impossible for such a one to be renewed by repentance, &c.: this is the same with the sin against the Holy Ghost: and this no man is guilty of, but he, that hath cast off all means tending to salvation and eternal life, and all desires after it. There is also an apostacy from great attainments, both of gifts and graces: when a man's zeal to God's glory cools, when his vigor in holy duties faints, when his relish to spiritual objects vitiates, and he returns to a lukewarm and indifferent temper, and it may be to a sinful and wicked life: though this be very sad and dreadful, yet the man is both pardonable and recoverable: see that most comfortable place, Jer. iii. 22; "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee: for thou art the Lord our God."

I shall not instance any other aggravations, which make sin out of measure sinful, and make the sinner out of measure dangerous; since, if the old sinner, if the relapsing, if the apostatizing sinner be pardonable and salvable, none then have reason to exclude themselves from the hopes of eternal life.

Indeed, the only danger is, lest the wickedness of men abuse this most comfortable doctrine; and turn that into presumption, which is only intended to arm them against despair.

Indeed, both presumption and despair do tend, in divers manners, to enrage and harden men in sin.

The despairing person judgeth, "If I must not be saved, if my sins are such as that there is no pardon for them, to what purpose do I then live strictly, and vex, and cross myself, and perplex my life? I will let loose the reins, and enjoy myself; and reap as

great a crop as I can of pleasure: and, if I must go to hell, I will make the way as delightful as I can."

And the argument, on the other side, that encourageth and hardeneth the presumptuous sinner, is this: "Christ is able to save to the uttermost the vilest sinners. We hear no sins are beyond his all-sufficiency to save: therefore," say they, "what need we trouble ourselves to repent and reform? We will yet awhile indulge ourselves in sin: for the efficacy of Christ is as able to save in the last moment of our lives, as after many years' preparations."

We see iniquity everywhere fearfully abounding: and, though we use to say despair kills its thousands, and presumption its ten thousands; yet, if we narrowly consider, possibly it may be found that this kind of despair in men, arising from sloth and carelessness, is as great a source of impiety as presumption. Whence else is it, that many, who are convinced, and whose consciences are blackened with the sense of wrath, persist still to add iniquity to iniquity; but because they think that there is no salvation for them, that their doom is fixed, and that their state is determined? and, therefore, since they must pay so dear as eternal damnation, they are resolved to make up their pennyworths in their present pleasures of sin: like those in Jer. xviii. 12; "And they said, There is no hope: but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart." I should judge it one of the most conducible means to promote men's endeavors after godliness, if I could but bring them to a serious and settled belief that their salvation is attainable: for, certainly, so good a thing as salvation is, cannot but stir up affections and industry proportionable to our apprehensions of the valuableness of it.

Hence, then, to tell men what great sins Christ can pardon, what great sinners he can save, is no encouragement to presumption, but rather to the exercise of holiness: for, since the way to heaven is cleared from impossibilities, it is most unreasonable for men to stick at difficulties. But, if any abuse this doctrine of Christ's all-sufficiency to save the greatest sinners to sloth and the support of their wickedness; promising themselves peace and happiness in the end, though they go on in sin presumptuously, adding iniquity to iniquity; let me only tell them, and it will be enough to damp all their vain hopes, that, though Christ be able to save to the uttermost, yet he is not able to save them in their sins, but only from their sins.

That is the first demonstration of Christ's all-sufficiency to save

sinners, in these particulars. He is an all-sufficient Saviour, because he is able to save men from the greatest number, and from the most heinous sins in their nature; though they be as many as the sands, and as great as the mountains: he is able, by his sanctifying grace, to remove the filth of our sins; and, by his justifying grace, to remove their guilt: and he is able to convert and change the sinner at such an unlikely season, when he is hottest and most eager in the prosecution of his lusts: he is able to do this by the most contemptible means: he is able to save the oldest sinners; those, that have frequently relapsed into the same sins, and the greatest and most notorious backsliders, if they do but at last repent and return to him.

ii. Another demonstration is this: Christ's all-sufficiency to save appears in this, that HE IS ABLE TO BESTOW UPON US ALL-SUFFICING MERCY.

He is able to instate us in the choicest and richest blessings, that we are able either to receive or imagine; and, therefore, "he is able to save to the uttermost." If I should now mention temporal blessings in this account, the instance would sink too low. The world stands but as an empty cipher, and signifies but a great round nothing, when it is reckoned up with blessings which flow in upon us through Christ's all-sufficiency: and, yet, what a big vanity is this world, in the estimation of most men! If they have but a little part of it to bestow: it may be some slavish office, some slight and trivial gift; what a distance do they keep at! how are they overwhelmed with suitors and floods of attendance! and, when they see how many stand in need of them, they are apt to think themselves sufficient, and to stand in need of none. Should I say to the ambitious and proud man, Christ is able to make all the princes of the world crouch and humble themselves unto thee, and lick up the dust of thy feet: should I tell a covetous person, that Christ is able to make gold and silver not only as plenteous as stones, as in Solomon's time; but that he can turn stones into diamonds and dirt into gold, that he can sequester the estates of all men in the world and bestow them upon him: I need say no more unto such; for these men would believe, that Christ, by this, would prove himself an all-sufficient Saviour: this is that little, which they most regard and admire. Indeed Christ can do all this, for he is Lord of the whole world, and of all things in it: they are at his beck, and at his disposals. Yet had he no other, no better treasures to bestow than the whole world, it would not be satisfactory, since the whole world itself is but a poor insufficient thing: but Christ will have

his all-sufficiency to be seen and glorified, by giving that to his people, which is an all-sufficing good.

Three things, therefore, Christ doth bestow upon them, which indeed are all-sufficient.

Christ giveth unto his people,

An interest in an all-sufficient God.

A possession of all-sufficient grace.

An all-satisfactory inheritance.

1. He gives them *an interest in an all-sufficient God.*

All-sufficiency is God's most comprehensive attribute; that which speaks out all the rest in one word. Wisdom, power, justice, mercy, goodness, truth, are several perfections of the Divine nature, that shine gloriously, each of them in its own sphere; but, all-sufficiency is as it were the gloss and lustre, that doth redound or result from all these attributes combined together. Other attributes are like several stars, that shine with their proper and distinct light; but all-sufficiency is like a constellation, when all the stars make but one light. Therefore, when God proclaims himself to Abraham to be God Almighty, or God all-sufficient, Gen. xvii. 1, it was as much as if he had said, "I am wise in heart, mighty in power, merciful in disposition, just in proceedings, good in promises, faithful in performances:" for all-sufficiency is the issue and product of all the rest of God's attributes. Oh what a rich portion have they, that have all God's attributes for their own! This all-sufficiency, by Christ, becomes ours: Heb. xi. 16; "God is not ashamed to be called our God." What can Christ do more to approve himself to be a Saviour to the uttermost, than giving unto his an infinite boundless good? If the power of God, the wisdom of God, the salvation of God can save them, they are sure to be saved to the uttermost: and hence David so often glories, that God is his portion: Ps. xvi. 5; lxxiii. 26; cxix. 57. And what conclusion doth he draw from all this? Ps. xxiii. 1; "The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want." "No, soul: it is impossible for thee to want: all things are thine own: God is thine, and all God hath is thine: while others seek to quench their thirst at the broken, leaky cistern; thou mayst lay thyself at the fountain and spring-head of living waters, and there find complete satisfaction. Certainly, unless all-sufficiency may fail, unless God's attributes molder and drop away from him and leave him a destitute and indigent God, thou canst never be impoverished and without supply." God's wisdom is full of counsel, his power is full of protection, his mercy is full of pardon, his truth and faithfulness is full of security: and

those, certainly, must needs be ravenous and unsatiable desires, which such an all-sufficient God as our God is cannot fill and satisfy

2. Christ also *instates the soul in an all-sufficing portion of grace.*

Grace hath a double signification. It may either be taken for subjective or objective grace; or, what is the same, for relative or real grace.

Relative grace is that, whereby a change is made in the relation in which we stand to God.

In a state of nature, we stood in a threefold sad and wretched relation to God. We were strangers to God, rebels and enemies, and also guilty malefactors; and, as such, were liable to eternal condemnation. But, the grace of God intervening, makes a blessed change in all these relations: of strangers, we are brought near, and enrolled in the family of heaven; and so are made children of God and heirs of glory, by the grace of adoption: of enemies, we are made friends and intimates; and accepted through the Beloved, through the grace of redemption: of guilty malefactors, we are acquitted, and pardened, and accepted to eternal life, by the free and absolute grace of justification. Now this relative grace is not that, which is wrought in us; but it abides in God, and is only terminated upon us: indeed it is nothing else, but the acting of God's special love and favor towards us; and the word grace, in Scripture, is very seldom taken in any other sense but for relative grace, the acting of God's love and favor determined to us.

Subjective or real grace is that, whereby a change is wrought upon our natures, in our first regeneration; and whereby it is carried on gradually to perfection, in our further sanctification.

Universal habits of holiness are infused in our conversion by God; which, in Scripture, are called the new man and the new creature: we usually call them the principle of grace, and the working of grace. Those specifical habits, which are as so many branches of this universal habit, are, as I may so speak, the several limbs and members of the new man: and are commonly called the graces of the Spirit, as the grace of faith, love, and hope; and likewise the Spirit's acting of these graces, is called the acting of grace. Of these two kinds, the former is properly called grace: the latter, improperly; because, wherever it is wrought, it denotes the special favor and grace of God towards that soul.

Now both relative and real grace have an all-sufficiency in them, and are of an all-sufficing nature.

(1) A Christian's portion in relative grace is an all-sufficing and satisfactory portion.

It is so great, that you can desire no more: for this grace admits of no degrees; and he, that hath any of it, hath as much as any can have. Here, therefore, the weakest Christian may have abundance of comfort: others, possibly, may have greater measures of gifts and parts, and of the sanctifying graces of the Holy Ghost; but, in relative grace, all stand upon the same level. Adoption, justification, reconciliation, mystical union, all the privileges which Christ hath purchased for believers, are all common; and no more belong to the strongest, than to the weakest and most feeble Christian. An infant may be as much a son and heir, as a grown man. Others may, possibly, have greater measures of the Spirit of adoption, whereby they cry "Abba, Father;" but none can have a greater measure of the grace of adoption, nor is God more a Father to one than he is to another, no more to the strongest than to the weakest Christian: others may have a greater familiarity and acquaintance with God, but none can be more reconciled to God than thou art, if a true believer: others may have a more comfortable sense of this adoption, yet none can be more adopted and more justified than thou art. We do not usually beg of God further measures and further degrees of these things; but, if we stand under these relations to God, and have but the evidence of it in our own consciences, then we rest fully satisfied: therefore what Philip said to Christ, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," may every true Christian say, "Lord, show me my Father, show me that God is my Father, that I am adopted into the number of his children, and this sufficeth: I have no more to ask, no more to receive, in that particular."

(2) As the Christian's portion in relative grace is satisfactory; so, likewise, is his portion in the sanctifying graces of the Holy Spirit an all-sufficient and satisfactory portion.

"How can that be?" may some say. "Are not Christians always unsatisfied in their present attainments; and think they have got nothing, if they fall short of absolute perfection? Either they are not sufficient, or else their desires are most unreasonable."

I answer. Though the truth of grace wrought in a Christian makes him always desirous of more than what he hath already; yet is that grace sufficient and satisfactory, in three respects:

[1] The least degree of true grace is sufficient to make the heart upright and sincere; sufficient to break the reigning power of sin, and to cast Satan out of his throne: it is sufficient to sway the heart to God, as its chiefest good; and to make his interest in the soul victorious and prevalent over the interest of the world and flesh. This sufficiency the weakest degree of true grace hath.

And, herein, is Christ's power and ability to save most eminently glorious. Grace is a creature, in its own nature, mortal and corruptible; and, should Christ, but for a moment, suspend his influence, every temptation, every corruption would easily destroy it: now for Christ to preserve this weak and helpless creature in the midst of so many strong and mighty corruptions that oppose it, argues as all-sufficient a power, as it doth to preserve alive a single spark of fire in the midst of the raging and foaming sea. Now Christ not only preserves this weak grace alive, but makes it victorious and triumphant over all the powers of hell: they are not able to stand before it: it batters down their strong-holds: it routs armies of lusts and temptations: it alters and changes every faculty of the soul, and reduces them all to obedience; as if it were Christ's design, not only by his power to save the soul, but to do it in such a way as should most of all shame the devil, baffling and subduing him by such a weak and contemptible thing as grace. And therefore St. Paul, when he prays against that temptation which sorely buffeted him, 2 Cor. xii. 9, God answers him, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness:" as boisterous and as raging as thy temptations are; yet it shall appear, that thy weak grace, through my strength, shall at length overcome them.

[2] The least degree of true sanctifying grace is sufficient to entitle the soul to heaven and glory.

Let weak and doubting Christians, therefore, know this for their comfort, that the promise of eternal life is not made to the degrees of their grace, but to the truth of it; not to grace as strong, but to grace as true. Now the truth of grace may be in the least and in the weakest degree. That grace, to which our salvation is principally ascribed, is our faith: now it is not said, he only, whose faith is so strong as to overcome all temptations and all doubts and to flourish up into assurance, he only shall be saved; but, whosoever believes shall be saved, though his faith be very weak and very wavering. And the reason of this is clear: for faith doth not save us as it is a sanctifying, but as it is a justifying grace; for, if it saves us as it sanctifies, then must all perish, since the faith of the strongest believer is mixed with so many imperfections, that render him worthy of eternal death. Faith therefore saves, as it justifies; and justifies, as it entitles us to Christ's perfect righteousness: which title we obtain by being united to him and made one with him, through this grace of faith. But a weak faith is a most sure and inviolable bond of union to Christ, as well as a strong faith:

a weak faith can make a full conveyance of the righteousness and merits of Christ to the soul, as well as a strong faith; therefore, the weakest faith of the most trembling and timorous Christian doth as firmly entitle him to heaven and glory, as the most strong and undaunted faith of the most assured Christian. Thus, then, though the children of God complain sadly of the weakness of their grace: yet, in the very least and meanest degree of grace, there is a twofold sufficiency; a sufficiency to break the reigning power and dominion of the strongest lust, and a sufficiency to give a firm title to heaven and glory. And what would you have more? Hath not Christ approved himself an all-sufficient Saviour, in giving and dispensing such grace, that the weakest and lowest condition of believers hath such a great sufficiency as this is?

But this is not all: for

[3] The least degree of true grace is a sufficient ground of joy and comfort; for comfort and satisfaction, for joy and assurance.

These overflowing joys, this glorious assurance, believers may abound with, even then when they most of all complain of the poverty and weakness of their grace. It is not the degree of our graces, that gives us comfort and satisfaction; but it is the knowledge and evidence of the truth of them in our own consciences. The sun may be in a black and dismal eclipse, when many glittering and twinkling stars are not: the tallest cedars cast the longest shade: and so, many times, that Christian, that is the tallest and the most eminent in godliness, may be under the blackest and saddest desertions. The measures of comforts are not stinted by the measures of grace; but the meanest grace is a ground of true and inward joy and satisfaction when the Spirit's witness doth irradiate it to us, as well as the greatest degree of grace. Joy and satisfaction flow from grace: both as it is the possession of that which in itself is very desirable; and because, more especially, it is the earnest of a future glorious inheritance. And hence it is, that there may be, at once, in the same heart, a complaining for the want of grace, and yet joy unspeakable and full of glory for what we have. As grace in itself is the most desirable good, so a Christian sadly complaineth that he hath no more, but is stinted and kept so short in his allowance: but then, as grace is the earnest of future glory, so it yieldeth joy in the very possession; as knowing that a penny is as good an earnest as a pound, and the weakest grace may as firmly assure a Christian of eternal glory as the strongest.

Thus I have shown that there is an all-sufficiency and satisfac-

toriness in the weakest and lowest degree of grace, if it be but sincere. For, it is sufficient to make the heart upright and sincere: it is sufficient to break the reigning power of sin: it is sufficient to cast Satan out of his throne; it is sufficient to sway the heart to God: it is sufficient to entitle the soul to heaven and glory: and, consequently, is always a sufficient ground of true joy and comfort.

3. *If an imperfect state of grace be of an an all-sufficing nature, what will it be, when grace shall mount up into glory? If there be so much in the earnest, what what will there be in the inheritance itself?*

And this declares the all-sufficiency of Christ indeed, since he is able to instate us in such great and rich possessions, that "the eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man" to conceive what they are, as the Apostle speaks. St. Paul, who once enjoyed a translation, and himself gives us a relation of his voyage into the other world, tells us no more than this, that he was caught up into paradise, and that he heard words unutterable, that it was not lawful or possible for him to utter; 2 Cor. xii. 4–11: the happiness of heaven is so great, that it cannot be fully known, till it be fully enjoyed: it is a remaining rest, an inaccessible light, fresh and overflowing pleasures, an incorruptible crown, an eternal kingdom, too much for me to utter or you to conceive. Nevertheless, if the sight and full fruition of God, if the society of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, if everlasting songs of praises and hallelujahs, if eternal raptures and ecstacies can be accounted a supporting and an all-sufficing good, all these serve to extol the all-sufficiency of Christ our Saviour, who can bestow upon us this ravishing, satisfying joy and glory. God is now to us the spring-head and fountain of all our mercies and comforts; and we lie below at the fall of this spring, and draw refreshments from him only through the conduit pipes of providences and ordinances, and live upon second-hand enjoyments; but, in heaven, we shall be laid close to the fountain itself, and drink in divine communications as they flow immediately from God, without having them deadened and flattened in the conveyance. Now we behold him through a glass darkly: then, we shall see him face to face, see him as he is, and know him as we are known by him. And, if it causeth now such raptures of joy in us, when he sometimes darts in half a glance of his eye upon the soul, O then, within what bounds can our joy contain itself, when we shall constantly fix our eye upon God, and steadfastly behold his face; that face, from which the most glorious angels, as conscious of their own unworthiness to behold it, cover and vail their own! If now, when God gives

us some glorious discoveries of himself, we are ready to faint and melt down under them, certainly, in heaven, when we shall lie under the glorious rays of the Deity beating fully upon us, they will be so great, that there were no living there did not the same God strengthen as well as fill our capacities. This is that beatific vision, that heaven of heaven, that glory wherein the angels are satisfied; that sight, wherein God shall bestow upon us a clearer eye than that of faith, and be always present with us in a nearer way than that of comfort. This is that all-sufficient and all-satisfying state, unto which the Lord Jesus Christ can and will bring all his: a state of inconceivable and endless felicity, far surmounting in glory whatever our narrow conceptions can now apprehend: a state, wherein we shall forever join with angels in singing praises to the Lamb, who hath redeemed us with his own blood, and manifested himself to be an all-sufficient Saviour, "able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him;" purchasing so great and glorious an inheritance for them, and bringing them to the possession of it.

That is the second demonstration.

iii. Christ's all-sufficiency to save doth appear in this, that HE IS ABLE TO SAVE FROM THE GREATEST MISERY, AND TO SUPPLY THE GREATEST WANTS.

1. There is but one *estate of misery*, out of which Christ cannot save: and that is a state of damnation. And yet the damned spirits are not finally irrecoverable, for want of intrinsical value and satisfactoriness in Christ to deliver them; but because Christ never intended to purchase salvation for them: had his sacrifice been intended for them as it was for us, and the means applied to them as well as to us, those chains of everlasting darkness, which they are now reserved in, would have dropped off; and they would have been snatched as brands out of the fire, in which, for want of this, they must burn forever. Suppose what estate you will short of hell, we are by Christ recoverable out of it.

I shall instance in two particulars, wherein the very depth and bottom of our misery doth consist.

We are, by our sins, forfeited to the justice and vengeance of God: and he, that can imagine a greater misery than this, never knew what it was to fall into the hands of the living God.

We are in the possession of the devil: and he is that strong man, that rules with rigor; and, unto him, we are all naturally become slaves and vassals.

Now when we are thus liable and obnoxious to the wrath of

God as our judge, and fallen into the hands of the devil as our jailor, will it not be acknowledged, that Christ saves from the uttermost misery, if he can rescue us? Is there any, that can deliver us, when both God and the devil and all the powers both of heaven and hell set themselves against us? Yes, the Lord Christ hath done it already.

(1) In respect of God, and of Divine justice to which we stood obnoxious, he hath fully satisfied and paid down an all-sufficient price for our deliverance.

Therefore saith the apostle, 1 Cor. vi. 20; "Ye are bought with a price, &c." 1 Pet i. 19; "The precious blood of Christ." And this is such a price, as hath discharged for us the very utmost farthing of all that we owe to divine justice. And therefore saith God, in Job xxxiii. 24, "Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom:" I have discharged him from the guilt of his sins, and obligation to punishment: I am fully satisfied.

(2) But, though the judge be thus satisfied, yet the devil, the jailor, would fain retain the prisoner, and is resolved not to part with him upon these terms: he hath possession of him, and he rules in him and over him, and therefore rescue him who can. Therefore Christ saves us by conquest and plain force, in respect of the devil. After he hath satisfied God, he subdues Satan, and completes the work of our redemption.

And, therefore, in Scripture, we read of the sufferings of Christ, by which our salvation is achieved, under both these notions. As Christ paid the price to God's justice: Mat. xx. 28; He gave "his life a ransom for many." 1 Tim. ii. 6; He "gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." And as a victory gained over the devil: "Through death," Christ destroyed "him that had the power of death, that is, the devil:" Heb. ii. 14. Col. ii. 14, 15; "Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances, that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross. And, having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." He hath exposed the devil and all the black host of hell to shame and infamy, in having their prey so strangely plucked from them: and he "triumphed over them in" his cross; v. 15.

And thus he saves us, by ransom in respect of God, and by conquest in respect of the devil: he saves us from the greatest misery imaginable, from the dungeon of the lowest hell. So long as your case is not so desperate as to be in hell, be your misery more or less, this makes no difference in respect of Christ, though it calls

for greater love and thankfulness from you to him for your deliverance.

Seeing, therefore, that Christ is thus able to save us from the utmost and greatest misery, it appears that he is an all-sufficient Saviour.

2. As he is able to save us from the greatest misery, so he is able to relieve us *in our greatest and most pressing wants,* be they inward or outward, be they corporal or spiritual.

"My God" can abundantly "supply all your need, according to the riches of" his "glory by Christ Jesus:" Phil. iv. 19. Is it pardon you need? in Christ "we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;" Eph. i. 7. Is it peace with God? we have it with him, through Christ: Rom. v. 1; "We have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Is it peace of conscience? "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus:" Phil. iv. 7. Indeed Christ is such an overflowing fountain of all good, that he fills the empty and satisfies the thirsty: and all that rely upon him, "He is able to save them to the uttermost," yea, all "that come unto God by him."

iv. Another demonstration of Christ's all-sufficiency to save appears in this, in that HE IS ABLE TO SAVE, WHEN NONE ELSE CAN.

He appears to save those, that come to God by him, when neither men nor angels stand up in their behalf; and, if they did, they could not relieve nor help them: then Christ interposeth.

And, as Christ alone procures salvation for us, so he alone can apply that salvation to us. And this he doth, more especially, at two seasons; when all others are but miserable helpers or comforters to us. As,

1. *When the dreadful terrors of the Almighty surround us.*

When God brandishes his sword over our heads; when he makes deep wounds, and, instead of balm, pours into our consciences fire and brimstone; O, what Saviour can then deliver us? then, when those insolent hopes and vain confidences of salvation, with which we formerly supported ourselves, forsake us? then, when our own righteousness, in which we formerly trusted, is as filthy garments; or, like a searcloth, increaseth our torments? then, when all the pleasures and debaucheries of the world, that men have formerly delighted in, are only to them as if a person stung with wasps should apply honey to assuage the smart? So, truly, when their

waspish consciences stung them with the guilt of sin, they stuck to the honey, to the sweet delights and pleasures of the world: but, now, this honey is turned into gall and wormwood: God and they are enemies: he hath dipped his arrows in the lake which burns forever, and hath shot them all flaming into their souls; so that they are all of them but one wound: and what relief is there for them? "A wounded spirit who can bear?" Yet Christ bare it upon the cross, when he cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And he, that cured himself, can also cure another. His blood, poured into these wounds, is a present remedy, and gives present ease and relief. And, therefore, as he designs to make peace between God and us, so likewise between man and himself; giving him that peace of conscience, which quiets and appeases: Isa. lxi. 1. It is no less work to reconcile man and conscience together upon good and warrantable grounds, than to reconcile God and man together: and it is only Christ's all-sufficiency, that can do either.

2. Another reason is, *when we shall appear before the tribunal of God, at the last and terrible day.*

What a dreadful sight will it be, to behold and see heaven and earth all wallowing in flames; and angels flying through the air, and driving whole shoals of men before them to judgment; the Judge being set, the books opened; God, conscience, and the devil accusing; and all the world crying out, "Guilty, guilty;" and the sentence passing on them accordingly, and millions of them being dragged to execution from the bar where they were condemned! You cannot then cry to your honors and dignities to save you; for you must all stand upon the same equal level. It is not your righteousness, that can then save you: no; the defects of it shall then be found part of your charge. What then is there to save you? your guilt is manifest; your judge impartial: and, if once sentence is passed, the execution is speedy. And, certainly, now it is time for an all-sufficient Saviour to appear, when the whole world is burning about them, and hell under them: God frowning in their very faces, and the devil attending them at their backs ready to hurry them away to torments. And now, when there is no pity to be expected from angels or men, then Christ appears to be an Advocate, to answer for his, and to silence all the accusations produced against them: and, by his satisfaction and perfect righteousness, he brings them off with shouts, and the applause of glorious angels and saints.

And thus it appears he is able to save them, when none else can.

v. Christ is able to save to the uttermost, in that HE IS ABLE TO SAVE THOSE, THAT CONDEMN THEMSELVES, AND THINK THEIR OWN SALVATION A THING IMPOSSIBLE.

There is a twofold judging and condemning of one's-self: one, in point of merit and desert; the other, in point of issue and event: the one judgeth himself, as one now deserving condemnation; the other, that he must suffer it: the one, as due; the other, as unavoidable. Now Christ saves from both these; and that gloriously.

1. He saves those, *that judge themselves worthy of eternal death.*

Yea, indeed, he saves no other: 1 Cor. xi. 31: "If we....judge ourselves, we shall not be judged." And why is this self-judging so necessary, in order to our being acquitted by God; but only because it is Christ's design in saving sinners, to glorify his exceeding great and all-sufficient power? and, therefore, we must acknowledge ourselves to be lost in ourselves, that so God's power may be owned to be exceeding great and glorious in saving us.

2. Christ can save those, who do not only judge themselves worthy of eternal death, but those *who judge themselves appointed to it.*

He can save those, who think it impossible that they should be saved. And, unquestionably, there is now many a soul in heaven, who on earth cried out, there was no hope, no mercy for them; that hell and wrath were their only portion. And this shows what an all-sufficient Saviour Christ is, who can save beyond our hopes, and contrary to our expectations.

And thus I have arrived at the end of the demonstrations of Christ's all-sufficiency, to save from the greatest misery, and to relieve us in our greatest and most pressing wants. He is able to save us, when none else can; and he is able to save those, that condemn themselves, and think their own salvation a thing impossible: he is able, both to save those, that think themselves worthy of eternal death; and those, that think themselves appointed to it.

III. Having thus displayed, though weakly, the all-sufficiency of Christ to save, we will proceed to close up the subject, with some brief APPLICATION of this doctrine.

### USE I.

This should teach us, TO HAVE MOST HIGH AND HONORABLE THOUGHTS OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHO IS THUS ALL-SUFFICIENT TO SAVE.

Omnipotence, though it should destroy us, were justly the object of our dread and reverence; but omnipotence to save, deserves our most affectionate esteem. It should raise wonder in us, when we consider God's power and goodness in the works of creation; but, when we contemplate the work of redemption, it should raise our wonder to an ecstacy. Christ's almighty power was not so glorious, then, when he spake the world out of nothing; then, when he lighted up the sun in the firmament, and kindled the stars as so many shining torches that dart forth light upon the world and extend their influences to the whole universe; as when he appeared in flesh, despised and of no account, in the form of a servant, to accomplish the wonderful work of our redemption. What he did in the former, was by the association and joint-workmanship of the other persons of the Blessed Trinity; but, in this, the whole work lay upon him: he trod the wine-press of his Father's wrath alone. In the former, though he showed his power to be great, yet he did not put it forth to the uttermost: he could have created more worlds, and he might have made more of each sort of creatures, and these far more beautiful and glorious than they are; but, in the work of redemption, Christ's infinite power is extended to the uttermost: his person was infinite, and his sufferings were infinite; one proportionable to the other. His omnipotence as our Redeemer is far more glorious, than his omnipotence as our Creator. Christ first gives the honor of his all-sufficiency to this end, that, for his undertaking so great an employment as the accomplishment of the work of our redemption, we might honor him in his own person, as we honor the Father in his: John v. 23. Certainly, there is good reason why we should ascribe honor to him, from whom we receive salvation.

### Use ii.

Is Christ an All-sufficient Saviour? Why do we then rely upon that, which is altogether insufficient?

What the Prophet said, in another case, 2 Kings i, 6, 7, "Is it.....because there is no God in Israel, that thou sendest to inquire of Baalzebub, the god of Ekron?" the same may I say: Is it because there is none deputed to be a Saviour, because there is none appointed, none able to save, that men betake themselves to false refuges? to broken reeds, that are so far from supporting, that certainly they will both betray and wound them? It is a strange folly, of which most men are guilty, that, when God hath provided

them a Saviour to their hands, one that is able to save to the uttermost, yet, with a great deal of toil and labor, they seek to set up other saviors of their own: as if it were just reason to distrust the mercy of God, because they have deserved his wrath. There is not one here, who has not hopes of heaven and a blessed eternity: and something we all rely upon, as sufficient to heart us up in it. If I should go first to one, and then to another, and put the question, "Do you hope to be saved?" where sits the person, that will not show his strong hopes; and almost disdain that such a question should be asked him? "Yes," would every one say: "we have all good hopes; and, though the most perish and few are saved, yet we have all hopes that we are of the number of those few." Were but the grounds and reasons of men's hopes made visible, we should find, that that, upon which they most support themselves, is no better than that mentioned in the book of Job, to say of gold, Thou art my hope; and of "the fine gold, thou art my confidence;" Job xxxi. 24.

1. Some *trust presumptuously to the mercy of God to be saved.*

And this is the plea of many ignorant persons: here, it may be, it is a secret to those who can pretend more knowledge in the mysteries of salvation, that God is merciful and gracious, and that the world is but scared out of their wits, when we represent God in such furious shapes as if he were all vengeance! his mercy is infinite; and who would not hope? It is true: but his justice and severity are as infinite as his mercy: why then dost thou not fear? Must God remit the attribute of his mercy, if he doth not save thee? Why thou thyself judgest he is infinite in mercy, though he hath condemned thousands of others. "But we will never believe, that that God, which made us, will destroy us." If this be all, know that the devils have as good a plea as this: were not they the workmanship of God? were not they more glorious creatures than thou art? and he, that "spared not the angels" which fell, will least of all spare thee: doth not the Prophet direct us against this plea, Isa. xxvii. 11? "It is a people of no understanding: therefore, he, that made them, will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will show them no favor."

Quest. "But how can it consist with the goodness of God to punish momentary sins? Those, that are but as a flash, and gone in the twinkling of an eye, how can he punish them with everlasting destruction?"

Ans. It is true, the act of sin is momentary and transient; but yet there is something in sin, that is permanent and eternal: and

that ariseth from the guilt of it. God doth not punish for the act of sin, that is past and gone; but for the guilt of it, that remains: the black guilt of that sin, which was committed a hundred years ago, remains still upon the souls of the damned; and therefore God justly punisheth them and will do so eternally, because all their eternity of sufferings can never satisfy the offended justice of the Divine majesty. These hopes, therefore, are all vain.

2. Some *trust to their own righteousness:* and set up their own good works and duties for their all-sufficient Saviour.

There is nothing harder than to persuade men to look beyond themselves for life. As they have been their own destroyers, so they would fain be their own saviors: and yet what is this, but a delusory sottishness? and those are hardliest beaten off from relying upon their own righteousness, who have the fewest good works. But this is a weak ground of hope, upon which men venture their souls for eternal happiness. It is observable, that the hope of a hypocrite is compared to *a spider's web:* Job viii. 14: spiders' webs, you know, are spun out of their own bowels: when the spider hath made its web with much pains, and set itself in the midst of it, it is but a weak and defenceless thing, easy to be swept away: so is it with these vain hopes of sinners; they are spun out of their own bowels, out of their good works and righteousness, and, when they set up themselves in the midst of them, expecting to catch heaven in their web, they will find it but a weak and indefensible thing: for conviction of sin will break this web; if not, death and judgment will, and then the sinner will unexpectedly drop into hell. Now from the consideration of all this, it greatly concerns us not to trust to or rely upon our own, but Christ's righteousness, lest we fall into condemnation.

Christ hath done two things for us as our Saviour:

He hath made a full satisfaction and expiation for the guilt of our sins.

He hath procured acceptance of our persons and performances with God.

Now if we trust to our own righteousness for either of these, we make that our Saviour, and not Christ.

Examine yourselves now; and search what it is, that you propound to yourselves when you perform duties towards God.

Do none of you perform duties to this end, that thereby you may be freed from the guilt of sin, and pay down a price for your former transgressions? When you commit sin, many times, do not you think you will make amends to God by the next prayer and con-

fession, and bemoaning of yourselves for it? That, upon which men rely to satisfy their consciences, they rely upon to satisfy divine justice. Now when conscience grows vexed and angry, what are the methods that men use to quiet it? If they can but reckon up the number of their good works and duties, they value them, instead of the blood of Christ.

Do none of you rely upon your own righteousness and good works, to procure acceptance with God? For mark, upon what account men hope their duties shall be accepted, upon the same they hope themselves shall be accepted. Put it to the trial: do not you hope that your duties shall be accepted for their own sake? True it is, you pray that God would hear and answer you for Christ's sake: but yet the generality of men rest upon the excellence of their prayer to make them acceptable; for consider, have you not different hopes of the acceptance of your duties, upon your different performance of them? If your hearts are sometimes drawn out in prayer and mightily enlarged, do not you rise up and say with full confidence, that your prayers are accepted with God as a sweet savor? but, at other times, when your hearts are more dead and flat, and your prayers hang heavy upon your lips, when you can but groan and chatter, then you conclude you are afraid that God doth not regard that prayer nor accept it. This is an evidence, that you measure the acceptance of your duties, by the worth and excellence of them: the one is dull and sluggish, and that you give over as lost and vain; the other vigorous and sprightly, and you doubt not but that pierceth heaven, and obtaineth audience with God: never thinking of the intercession of Christ, which alone can make them acceptable. If this be the end which men make of performing their duties, to make them their Christs, and rely upon them for salvation; though it be a means to it, yet it is insufficient of itself to obtain it.

### Use iii.

Is Christ an all-sufficient Saviour, able to save to the uttermost? Let us then be persuaded to come to him, to accept him for our Saviour.

Were I now to press you to some hard and difficult duty, to the exercise of self-denial and mortification, to be willing to lay down your lives for Christ, I might rationally suspect that these exhortations should be rejected; unless they came with great power, strong arguments, and prevalent motives: but, when it is only to accept of that Christ who hath laid down his life for you, and of

that salvation which he hath laid up for you and tenders to you; certainly, such an exhortation as this carries argument and motive enough in itself to prevail. But, because men are wedded to their own sins, and because they are resolved against their own happiness, I shall lay down some considerations, which, if they do not persuade them to close with Christ, may at least convince them how unreasonably they put away salvation from themselves.

And here,

1. Consider, that *you all stand in most absolute need of an all-sufficient Saviour.*

You are lost, beyond all the power and skill of men and angels to recover you; and God protests that he will save you no other way but by Christ: Acts iv. 12; "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." There is no choice for you, but either Christ, or eternal damnation; either the Son of God, or the wrath of God. You are all under guilt, and there is no other way of satisfaction to divine justice, but either his blood or yours. You now hear these things; and, possibly, slight them: but that day and hour are coming, and will not tarry, when death shall snatch you away to judgment; and when you shall lift up those hands at the great bar, with which you thrust away salvation from you. That Christ, whom you have scorned and contemned, as a merciful Saviour; you will then tremble at, as a most severe and just Judge.

2. Consider, *If you now come unto Christ, he is willing and ready to receive you.*

He himself tells you so: John vi. 37; "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." Indeed, all-sufficiency to save, without willingness, serves only to increase the anguish of our ruin and destruction. But this may be for our comfort, that Christ hath no more power in his hand to save us, than willingness in his heart. It is not indeed Christ's power, that despairing souls use to object against, but his will. "We know," say such, "that Christ is able to save us: but how know we that he is willing?" Truly, his all-sufficiency gives us good security of his will. Hath Christ left the bosom of his Father, hath he undergone no less than infinite wrath and sufferings, and all for this end, that he may be an all-sufficient Saviour? and shall we yet doubt, after all this, whether he is willing to save us or not? Certainly, if it stood Christ in so much to procure to himself ability to save, we have no reason to doubt, that, since he hath obtained that ability, he should now want a will to do it. Therefore, since Christ was appointed by the Father to

save sinners, and since he was fitted with an all-sufficient power to effect salvation, and since this all-sufficiency wants not willingness, be persuaded to accept him; and be as willing to be saved by him, as he is willing to save you.

3. Consider, that *though Christ be an all-sufficient Saviour, and able to save to the uttermost; yet he is not able to save them, that refuse and reject him.*

A medicine doth not cure, because it is compounded of such and such ingredients, though never so well suited to that distemper; but because it is applied: so neither doth Christ save us, as he is compounded of many precious ingredients that qualify and fit him to be an all-sufficient Saviour, as his deity, humanity, unction of the Holy Spirit, and his own willingness; but as received, as believed on, and applied to the soul by faith: and, therefore, whatever he hath done or suffered in his life, death, or resurrection, will all be but in vain to us; and his precious blood will run waste, if, through impenitence and unbelief, we reject this all-sufficient Saviour, and keep at a distance from him.

4. Consider, *If you do not accept Christ and salvation by him, you will be rejected by him to your greater and sorer condemnation.*

Think you not, that it will heighten your sin here, and your misery hereafter; that, when God hath been at so much cost and so much care to furnish an all-sufficient Saviour for you, you should be found to neglect so great salvation? Think not, that the tenders of Christ and salvation, which are made to you, are indifferent; that, though you slight and neglect them, you shall be in the same condition you were before: no; but the despising of Christ, and the abusing of grace, and the neglecting of so great salvation, are those things, that inspirit and inflame hell-fire, and make the never-dying worm to gnaw more cruelly, and will sink you deeper into that scalding lake that burns with fire and brimstone where you shall be burnt in streams and drowned in flames. It had been better for you, that there never had been a Christ tendered, grace exhibited, and salvation purchased for you by Christ. If we neglect this salvation, we are without hope or possibility of recovery forever. Pray observe what the Apostle speaks, after he had been comparing Christ and Moses, together with the wrath that should follow upon the despising of the one and the despising of the other: Heb. x. 28, 29; "He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy, under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God; and hath counted the blood

of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing; and hath done despite unto the Spirit of Grace?" These shall not have so much mercy afforded them, as to die without mercy.

And, thus, I have handled this excellent portion of Scripture, concerning Christ's intercession, and his all-sufficiency to save all that come unto God by him.

THE

# EXCELLENCE OF HEAVENLY TREASURES.

*But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.* MAT. vi. 20, 21, 22.

## INTRODUCTION.

THERE is not a soul in the world so destitute and beggarly, but it hath somewhat that it may call, and doth esteem, its treasure. Not only he, that hath, as the Psalmist speaks, all that his heart can wish, who grasps in possession whatever his covetousness and unbounded desires grasp in imagination; but he also, that possesseth nothing but his own poverty, that hath no abundance but want and misery, such a one whom you would never suspect to be a hoarder, yet hath he that, the hopes and enjoyment of which he counts precious and his soul's treasure.

In dangerous and difficult times, what is the first and chief care of every man, but so to dispose of this his treasure, that, whatever losses he may sustain in other accessory good things, that are but lumber and utensils to the soul, yet his treasure may be secured both from corruption and violence?

Our Saviour here throws open before our view two repositories, or common treasuries: vast ones, they are; wherein all the good things, that ever any man in the world enjoyed, are laid up: and they are earth and heaven. If you have any treasure, as certainly every one of you has, it must belong to one of these two places: you must deposit it either on earth or in heaven. "Look now," says Christ: "take a view of earth's exchequer; and what see you there? There, indeed, is the world's treasure: all, that many millions of men have been gathering together, and hoarding up for several ages." If you would have an inventory of all this store, St. John hath exactly cast it up, in 1 John ii. 16, and it amounts to this sum: "All, that is in the world," saith he, is "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life:" that is, there are pleasures, suiting the propensity of the flesh: there are riches, for the greediness of "the eye;" for, "What," saith the Wise man, "is laid up for the owners thereof, save the beholding of them with their eyes?" And there are honor and dignity; there is that planetary, airy, good thing, which puffs up; viz., "the pride of life:" and this is

the world's all; and that, which many thousands make their treasure. 'Yea: but,' saith Christ, 'do not you see how rusty and worm eaten these things are? do you not see what a bustle there is among the men of the world to get them? one pulls and hauls them from another, and they are never certain in any man's possession: "moth and rust corrupt" them, "and thieves break through and steal;" and, therefore, "lay not up" your treasure here: there is another treasury for you to store up your good things in, and that is heaven; a sure and safe place, where no corruption doth infect, nor any violence intrude: therefore, lay up your treasure there: lay up your treasure in heaven.'

And thus you have the scope of our Saviour in these words.

In the words themselves, you have,

A command or exhortation; and that is, to lay up treasure in heaven.

You have the enforcement of this command.

And that is from a double reason:

First. From the security of that treasure, that is laid up in heaven. It is there safe and free from all danger; which it could not be, were it any where else deposited.

All hurt and danger, that can befall a man's treasure, proceeds either,

First. From inward principles of corruption, that do of themselves cause decay in it.

And thus it is with all earthly treasures. They are, of themselves, fading and perishing. Riches perish with the using: they rot out and wear away, while we are using them. All earthly manna, the sweet and luscious things of this world, breed worms, that eat upon and devour them. All the riches and treasures of the world have rust, that attends on them, and consumes both them and their beauty and substance. But spiritual manna never turns into worms: treasure, laid up in heaven, is never eaten with rust. No, saith Christ, there rust doth not corrupt: that is, they are free and safe from all inward decays and perishing, from their own inward principle and nature. And,

Secondly. Treasure may be unsafe, as from an inward principle that may corrupt, so also from outward accidents, that may consume them.

And thus we see oftentimes it comes to pass. Sometimes,

*First.* Insensibly, through a secret blasting curse of God, wasting them by little and little, and unperceived decays; so that, while we hold them in our hands and look upon them, then they perish.

And this is here compared to the eating of a moth. A moth makes not a sudden rent in a garment, but spoils it by unseen degrees: so fares it oftentimes with the things of this world: if they be not torn and rent from us, yet are they moth-eaten comforts: the moth is got into them, and destroys them imperceptibly. And, sometimes,

*Secondly.* By sudden violence; compared here to thieves breaking through and stealing away good things and treasure. An unexpected turn of providence doth, at once, many times snatch away all that men here prize and set their hearts on: and then, where is their treasure? In Hos. v. we find God threatening, both these ways, to destroy Ephraim. In v. 12; "I will be unto Ephraim," saith God, "as a moth; and to the house of Judah as rottenness:" that is, the Lord would consume them silently and imperceptibly, as a moth eats out in the spots of a garment. And v. 14; "I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah:" and "I, even I, will tear and go away: I will take away, and none shall rescue;" that is, I will destroy him by a violent and sudden destruction.

But, treasures laid up in heaven are secured, both from insensible decays, and also from sudden violence; secured, both from the corruption of the moth, and from the stealing of the thief. It is rich and sure treasure, that is laid up there. And now is the time of your laying up: some few years hence, and it cannot be long first, but you shall have these treasures opened to you, and you let in, to see how rich you are. And you will find them augmented above what you could believe: there is not the least of all that you have laid up lost or diminished. And then you will wonder and question with yourselves, who laid up this and that part of your treasure: you will then ask, "Is this glory mine, and that glory mine? this throne and that brightness, this diamond and those stars, this robe and that sunbeam, all this precious and inconceivable treasure, are they mine? I cannot remember that ever I laid up so much and such precious treasure: my faith sometimes pried through a crevice into this treasure, and it told me that there were great and glorious things stored up, and it told me also that they did belong to me; but, O my dim-sighted grace, that could not discover to me the one half of that glory, wherein I am now lost and swallowed up!" Thus a Christian will then wonder how he came by so much treasure, when he comes to the possession and enjoyment of it. There is a saying recorded in Plutarch, of a rich Roman, Crassus, that he did not think that man rich, that knew all

that he had: truly, in this man's account, a Christian is truly rich: he hath laid up more treasure, than himself knows of. But, though a Christian knows not how much he hath, yet he shall lose none: it is safe, being laid up in heaven: every star is as a seal set upon the treasure-door, that none may break in and violate it.

And that is the first argument: Lay up treasure in heaven, because there only it is safe: there, only, the moth doth not corrupt, and thieves do not break through and steal.

SECONDLY. And then, secondly, another enforcing reason you find in the next verse; and that is, because, by laying up treasure in heaven, you lay up your hearts also in heaven: "for where your treasure is," says Christ, "there will your hearts be also;" and where your hearts are, there are you.

What an argument is this, O Christians! Would you yourselves be laid up safely in heaven, before you come to be laid down in your graves? would you pre-occupy your own immortality and glory? would you send all your thoughts and all your desires, as spies into the land of promise, to discover the riches and beauty of it? Then lay up your treasure there: this will center all your thoughts, this will fix all your affections on itself; and, though now you are on earth and walk on earth, yet this will make your conversation to be in heaven, if your treasure be there. It is impossible that you and your treasure should be at a distance. If your treasure be on earth, your minds will be there also: you will grovel here below: the serpent's curse will be upon you; "Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life." But, if your treasure be laid up in heaven, it will attract and draw up your hearts unto it; and make them heavenly hearts, as itself is a heavenly treasure.

Now all this is backed with another consideration, in the beginning of the words; and that is, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." You may indeed lay up treasure on earth, but it is a hazard whether it be for yourselves. Here men sweat and toil to get estates, and heap up treasures; but they know not who shall enjoy and possess them: they labor all their days to purchase a few uncertain riches; while, usually, by the time they purpose to reap the fruit of them, death comes and snatches away their souls; and the greatest use they can make of them is, only to bequeath them unto others. He only, that "is rich towards God, layeth up treasure for himself;" and lays up those riches, to dispose of which he needs no legacy. A Christian is his own heir; and, what himself hath gotten, he himself shall eternally enjoy and possess.

And thus you have the parts of the text: "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven."

There is nothing in the words, that needs much explication: I shall, therefore, only in brief inquire into two things.

What is here meant by treasure?

What is meant by laying up this treasure in heaven.

First. What is here meant by treasure?

I answer: It is a metaphorical expression; and denotes to us that, upon which we set the highest rate and value; that, the getting of which we most endeavor, the enjoyment of which we most prize, the loss of which we most bemoan. In a word, that, which we account our greatest and best good, is our treasure, be it what it will.

Secondly. The next inquiry is, what is meant by laying up this treasure in heaven.

I answer: It is nothing else, but to esteem heaven and the things of heaven, thus to be our treasure; to rate and value them above all things else, and to look upon them as our chiefest good, and accordingly to seek and labor after them.

I might now propound many observations to you, as indeed every word of this precious Scripture is pregnant with them: but I shall only mention one; intending only to insist upon that: and it is this:

Doct. That HEAVENLY AND SPIRITUAL THINGS ARE, AND OUGHT TO BE, OF THE GREATEST VALUE WITH EVERY TRUE CHRISTIAN.

Or thus:

A TRUE CHRISTIAN DOTH ESTEEM, AND HE OUGHT TO ESTEEM, HEAVENLY THINGS ABOVE ALL THINGS.

What are these heavenly things, but God and Christ, grace and glory, spiritual and eternal concernments? These are the choice things of a Christian: whatever else he may possess, yet these are his treasure.

See how Abraham stings Dives with a sad item of what he made his treasure on earth, in Luke xvi. 25; "Son," says he, "remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things:" but did not Abraham himself, in his lifetime, receive good things also? Might not Dives have retorted back again, "Wert not thou, Father Abra-

ham, rich and potent on earth? Hadst not thou great power, and great possessions in the world? And, must I be tormented and thou glorified, when thou hadst a greater portion of them than myself?" No, the emphasis cuts off this exception: "Thou, in thy lifetime, receivedst THY good things." "I received good things; but not my good things; not the chiefest that I valued. Comforts they were; but not treasures: and, while I possessed these good things, I sought after better; and therefore I now possess and enjoy them also."

So holy Asaph views this treasure, that here he had got, in a divine rapture, in Psal. lxxiii. 25; "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth, that I desire, besides thee." He was so far from desiring any thing above God, that he desires nothing besides God. What is there on earth, that I can "desire besides thee?"

See St. Paul also, in 1 Cor. ii. 2; "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified:" but, especially in Phil. iii. 8; "Doubtless," says he, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffer the loss of all things; and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." Observe how the Apostle doth there contemn all, that the world counts its treasure: he reckons it but "dung," in which a man may rake long enough, before he finds any true treasure: nay, not only "dung," but "loss," in comparison of Christ. "And, what tell you me of losing all things for him? It is true, I have done so; but, in doing so, I have but lost a loss, I am but rid of a damage. I count all things but loss; and I suffer the loss of all things, for Christ."

This is the low and villifying account, that a child of God makes of every thing that is not his treasure. God and Christ, and the things of eternity, are his chief and choice good; and whatever he hath besides, is but dung, but loss, but a damage. In the heart of a carnal man, all things lie in a confused order; heaven below, and earth above: earth seems to him to be vast and infinite; but heaven a little inconsiderable spot. But, in the heart of a child of God, every thing keeps its natural posture: there earth sinks, as being the dregs of his thoughts and cares; but heaven shines above, very bright and glorious: earth, to him, seems to be but a little spot, as indeed it is, which is seldom seen or noted by him; but heaven is an infinite boundless sea of mercy, which he is still looking into and admiring. Thus things keep their natural posture, in the heart of a child of God; but they are all disordered, in the heart of a wicked man.

I. To prosecute this farther, I shall endeavor to OPEN TO YOU THE RICHES OF THIS HEAVENLY TREASURE; that it may appear how rationally the children of God act, in valuing this above all things, and in making it their choice good and chief treasure.

And,

i. It is an evident demonstration of the preciousness of this treasure, in that IT MAKES THOSE THINGS PRECIOUS ALSO, THAT ARE BUT CONVERSANT ABOUT IT; and therefore, certainly, it is mighty precious itself. It bestows a lustre, excellence and beauty upon every thing, that lies near it, or that hath any relation to it.

I will mention but two things.

1. *The deeds of conveyance, whereby this treasure is made over to us and becomes ours, are therefore precious, because they convey such a treasure.*

And what are they, but the promises? Every promise is a ticket, given us by God, to take up mansions of treasure in heaven: it is vocal glory: it is happiness, in words and syllables: it is eternity, couched in a sentence. And, therefore, no wonder that the Apostle speaks so magnificently of them: "Whereby," says he, "are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises."

Tell me, therefore, O soul! didst thou ever see the glory and riches, that are in a promise? Wert thou ever ravished with that infinite sweetness and deliciousness, that thou suckest from them? Didst thou ever sit down amazed at the free and boundless love of God in them; that spake good to thy soul, "for a great while to come," as David speaks? Didst thou ever find the excellence and preciousness of these things? Think, then, how precious that glory itself is, that fills these promises. If a star be so bright and sparkling, that shines only in a borrowed brightness, how transcendently bright then is the sun, that lends so much light to it! If the conduit-pipe be ready to burst, through the abundance of streams that flow from it; how inexhaustible is the fountain and spring-head, which supply this treasure! If the gleanings be so rich and full, what will the vintage be? The glory and happiness of heaven is so great and boundless, that it overflows and spills itself abroad in promises; and, if the overflowing drops be so sweet, what then will the ocean itself be? What says the Apostle, in 1 Pet. ii. 7? "Unto you, that believe," Christ "is precious:" How is he now precious unto believers, but as he is held forth in a promise? that is all the way in which he becomes precious to us

now. And will he not be far more precious to us, when we shall no more stand at the distance of a promise from him? when we shall no more need the hand of faith; but shall clasp and cling about him, in the immediate fruition of him? Will he not be more precious to us, when all our hopes shall be made good to us in actual present possession? And, therefore, if the promises be so "exceeding great and precious," it argues, certainly, that that treasure which makes these promises to be so, is wonderfully and infinitely glorious and precious.

2. As the deeds of conveyance, so *the very eye, that sees and views this treasure, is made precious by the sight of it.*

And what is that eye, but the eye of faith? and, though it be but weak, yet it is that, with which, by the help of a promise as by a prospective glass, we look into heaven itself, to see that mass and those heaps of treasure laid up there for the soul. The eye of faith sees them: the hand of faith tells them out: and, therefore, St. Peter calls it precious faith: 2 Pet. i. 1; "To them, that have obtained like precious faith with us." You may look upon earthly treasure till your eyes be dazzled, yea, possibly till they be weakened and wearied by it; but never will they be made more rich and precious by it; but, by looking upon this heavenly treasure, the eye that sees it becomes a jewel itself: "more precious," saith the same Apostle, "than" the "gold that perisheth:" 1 Pet. i. 7.

And that is the first excellence of this heavenly treasure. It is precious treasure, in that it makes those things precious, that are but conversant about it: precious faith, and precious promises.

ii. Heavenly treasure is SOUL TREASURE, SUITED TO THE SOUL.

And, therefore, look how much more noble and excellent the soul is than the body, so much more excellent is heavenly treasure than earthly treasure. For what serve these things on earth, but to clothe and feed the body; and yet, for all this, the soul may be naked, and miserable, and want suitable provision. Truly, we may lament the condition of the richest sinners on earth; and say over them, in compassion, O poor souls, what husks and swine's-meat do you give your souls, while you set the whole world before them! for, all in the world is no better. There is nothing in it, whence you can pick out suitable nourishment for them; and therefore Christ justly brands the rich man in the Gospel for an arrant fool, who, when he had filled his barns with corn, said to his soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years.....eat, drink,

and be merry." Luke xii. 19. A fool, indeed! to reckon his soul's goods by barnfuls! he might as wisely have boasted, that he had provided barns full of thoughts for his body, as barns full of corn for his soul. And, yet, such is the provision, that most men make for their precious souls. Tell me, sirs, do you really believe, that this is such provision as your souls can live upon? or, do you think your souls need no provision? What! must your bodies, that at first were kneaded out of the dust and must ere long be crumbled into dust again, must these bodies engross all your care, how to provide for them, and to please them; and shall your spiritual and everlasting souls be wholly neglected by you? It is not long hence, before your bodies shall never more know a difference, between treasure and poverty, between fulness and hunger; and, then, what serve all these things for, that, with so much pains and industry, you have laid up? Truly, it is a long journey into the other world; and gold, and silver, and earthly treasure are too heavy a portage to be carried with you thither. Those, that now make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience to get them, will, ere it be long, make shipwreck of them also. When you come to launch out into eternity, you shall carry nothing with you of your earthly treasure into the other world; unless it be the rust of it, to witness against you: nothing of your gold: unless it be the guilt of it, to condemn you. These are unfit things, therefore, to be laid up by you as your soul's treasure.

But heavenly treasure is suitable treasure; suitable to your souls: and that, in a twofold respect.

Heavenly treasures are suitable to the nature of your souls. And,

They are suitable to the necessities of your souls.

1. Heavenly treasures are *suitable to the nature of your souls.* And that, in these two respects,

They are spiritual treasures, for an immaterial soul. And,

They are durable treasures, for an immortal soul. And, therefore, they are suitable treasures.

(1) Heavenly treasures are spiritual; and therefore are suited to a soul, that is of a spiritual and immaterial substance.

Hence the Apostle, Eph. i. 3, blesseth God, "who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly" things "in Christ Jesus." Truly, heavenly things are these spiritual blessings, refined from all dull and earthly mixtures. God himself, who is the total sum of all the treasures of all the saints on earth, is a spirit: his love and favor, interest in him, communion and fellowship with

him, are all spiritual things, that a carnal eye cannot see, neither can a carnal judgment value. The most suitable are they, therefore, to a soul, that is a spirit. Of all things belonging to a man, the breath of a man is the most subtle, invisible, and spiritual: but the soul is called the breath of God metaphorically, Gen. ii. 7, and, therefore, is of a very high degree of spirituality. Now, bring spiritual things to spiritual: debase not thy spiritual and high-born soul, by matching it to the low and inferior things of the world: let not thy pure and spiritual soul be unequally yoked with the dregs and dross of any worldly enjoyment. God and Christ and the things of eternity are suitable to the soul: they are spiritual, like thy spiritual and better part; and, though to a carnal heart these seem but empty and notional things, yet a child of God tastes more sweetness and comfort in these things, than in whatever the world can present unto him. The love of God, the consolations of his Spirit, actings of grace, hopes of glory, these invisible things, these are the true riches.

And, then,

(2) Heavenly treasure is the only durable treasure, and therefore suited to an immortal soul.

The things of this world will not go one step with you beyond this present life. And, what a sad parting hour will that be to the soul, to go into another world, and to leave all its treasure behind in this world! How will it protract and linger; and how loth will it be to enter upon so great a journey, without a treasure to defray the charges of it! How ghastly will the soul look back upon those things, that it made its treasure! "What!" will it say, "must not I carry this estate and that treasure out of the world with me? Must we thus part forever?" Yes, O soul, forever: for none of these things canst thou carry with thee. And, oh! what a sad thing will it be, for the poor soul to be set ashore upon the vast ocean of eternity, and to have nothing at all to relieve and support it, all its treasure being in another world!

But heavenly treasure is durable treasure. It is current not only in this, but in the other world which is to come. In Prov. viii. 18, says Wisdom, "Riches and honor are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness." Indeed, righteousness is this durable riches. When all things in the world stare on thee, and thou on them, and so take leave of one another eternally; yet then the love of God, interest in Jesus Christ, his divine and heavenly graces, these will then stand by thee and keep thee company, yea and enter into heaven, and there abide with thee to all eternity. It is true

thy faith, that is now a busy and active grace, that like Moses doth here get up to Mount Pisgah and there take a view of the land of Canaan, must itself die before it comes there: yet this is no lessening of thy treasure, though thou dost lose thy faith; for, indeed, it is not so much the loss of thy faith, as the swallowing of it up, a changing of it into sight and vision: faith and fruition are inconsistent one with another. But all thy other graces, love, joy, and delight, which are now often eclipsed and faint, and languish in their actings, shall then keep an eternal jubilee. Never fear the failing of thy happiness. It is true, here, the waters do only bubble, and they may and often do fail; but, there, thou shalt bathe thyself in an infinite ocean of delight: there, thou shalt lie at an ever-bubbling fountain of sweetness: God shall be eternally there, and thou shalt be eternally there: he will be eternally glancing and smiling on thee, and thou shalt be eternally warming and cheering thyself in that sunshine. Therefore, think with thyself, if indeed God can be exhausted, if heaven itself can be impoverished, if infinite riches of glory can be all spent and consumed, then and not till then, can thy treasure fail thee: never shall one star of thy crown twinkle, much less shall it ever be eclipsed: 1 Pet. v. 4. We "shall receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away:" it shall be forever as glorious, orient, and flourishing, as it was at its first putting on. Indeed, eternity will be the perpetual beginning of thy happiness.

And thus you see how suitable this treasure is to the nature of the soul; in that it is spiritual treasure, for a soul that is a spirit; and it is durable treasure, for a soul that is immortal.

2. As heavenly treasure is suited to the nature of the soul, so also *to the necessities of the soul.*

What is it, that the soul can stand in need of, that it cannot be supplied withal from hence? Doth it need a price to redeem it? here is laid up the precious blood of Christ, that was shed for the sins of many. Is it pardon and forgiveness that it needs? here is abundant mercy. Is it sanctification and holiness? here are riches of grace. Is it joy and comfort? here are abundant consolations. Is the soul wretched, and poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked? here is gold to make it rich: here is white raiment to clothe it, and eye-salve to recover its sight. Indeed there is nothing, that the soul can want or desire, but you may have supplies for it from your own treasure; from that treasure, that you have laid up in heaven. See that rich place, Phil. iv. 19; "My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ

Jesus:" all your needs; not only your corporal needs and necessities, but also your spiritual necessities. Here, all earthly treasures fall short: the exigencies of the outward man they may relieve, but the greatest abundance of them cannot quiet a troubled conscience, nor appease an angry God, nor take off the guilt of sin; nor can they redeem the soul from eternal wrath: no, "the redemption of the soul is precious," yea, too precious to be purchased by all these things, "and it ceaseth forever." When God frowns upon the soul, and conscience lowers, and hell-fire flashes in the face of a sinner, how truly poor and miserable is that man, that hath no better support and comfort than these unsuitable things! All the world, as great as now it seems to be, will be judged too vile a price to procure one minute's ease. What would the soul then give for a Saviour, for a slighted and despised Saviour, to interpose betwixt it and justice? Believe it, then you will have other thoughts of the favor of God, of an interest in Christ, and of this heavenly and spiritual treasure, than now you have. Now, in your peace and prosperity, possibly, these appear to you to be no better than fancied treasures and airy riches: but, when the days of sorrow and darkness overtake you and come upon you, when God shall drop into your souls a little of his wrath and displeasure, then it will be in vain to seek ease from the world: all your pleasures, treasures, and enjoyments here below, will all tell you it is not in them to relieve you: you may as well seek to cure a wound in your flesh, by laying a plaster to your clothes: no; it is grace, that can then stand you in stead; it is that only, that can reach the necessities of the soul; and, without this, all your riches and treasures are but dear vanities, precious vexations, that will stand by and see you perish, yea and perish eternally, but cannot supply and help you.

iii. I now come to a third thing, wherein the excellence and the riches of this heavenly treasure do appear: and that is, because they are SATISFYING TREASURES; and so are not the treasures of the world.

Solomon himself, when he had reckoned up many items for honors, and pleasures, and riches; yet, at the bottom of the bill, at the foot of the account, he casts up the total sum by two great ciphers; "All is vanity and vexation," saith he: "vanity," in themselves; and "vexation," also, in the use and enjoyment of them: they that make more reckoning of this treasure, will be mistaken in their account. And is this the price of thy sweat and care? Is

this the price of thy early and late endeavors? Nay, is this the price of thy sins, for which thou destroyest thy soul and foregoest eternity? What! to hoard up vanity and emptiness, to grow rich in vexation! Wilt thou stretch thy conscience for that, which will never fill, but torment thee? Are these the great stately nothings, that the whole world admires, and runs mad after? Alas! you may as soon grasp your arms full of dreams, and hug your own shadows, as fill up the vast and boundless desires of your souls with these earthly things; that have scarce any proof of their reality, besides the vexation and torment that they bring with them. These things are to the soul but as wind to the stomach: gripe it they may; but they can never fill nor satisfy it. It is true, indeed, that you will find Esau, in Gen. xxxiii. 9, seemingly satisfied with his present condition, when he tells Jacob, "I have enough, my brother:" but this was rather because he was ashamed to acknowledge his want, by receiving from a fugitive; than any real satisfaction, that drew this speech from him: no; there is such a paradox in an earthly mind, that makes it true, that though oftentimes they have too much, yet they never think they have enough. But heavenly treasures are filling and satisfying treasures: though riches are empty, though honors and dignities are flatulent and windy, and crowns are lined with troubles, and sceptres are made massy with cares set on them; yet heavenly riches are substantial: the crown of glory and immortality is lined throughout with the down of eternal contentment and satisfaction.

Now these heavenly treasures are satisfactory in two respects.

They are satisfactory in themselves. And,

They put satisfactoriness into earthly enjoyments.

So that the soul, that possesseth heavenly treasure, finds contentment and satisfaction in every condition.

1. Heavenly treasures are *satisfactory in themselves.*

He, that enjoys them, needs look out no where else for happiness and contentment.

(1) The treasures of grace are thus satisfactory, where there is the light and evidence of assurance, to tell the soul how rich it is.

Grace, indeed, is this treasure, that may sometimes lie deep hid in the heart. When the soul is in the dark, under some gloomy fears or in a state of desertion, it doth not then know that it hath such a treasure: and, therefore, it cannot receive contentment and satisfaction from it. But, when the Spirit of God darts a beam of evidencing light into the dark vault, this rich treasure discovers itself by its own shining. Now, this shine of heavenly treasure is

assurance; and, when the Spirit darts in a beam of light to discover it in the heart, when it sees how rich it is in love, in faith, in hope, and in all other precious graces of the Spirit, it cannot sufficiently prize and value its own estate. It is true, indeed, that a gracious heart never thinks it hath enough: still, it is craving and laboring after more: still, it complains, that its graces are too weak, and those weak ones too few. Yet this holy covetousness carries no tormenting, perplexing anxiety and vexation with it: while it complains of the poverty of its graces, yet it prizeth them above all the world; and thinks its estate to be infinitely blessed and happy, if it hath but any degree of assurance: and, though the man be but poor and despicable in the world, yet ask him, whether he would change conditions with the greatest and the richest sinner on earth, he will tell you no: he values his present estate above ten thousand worlds; nay, he would not lose the least degree nor the least filing of his graces, for whatever enjoyments a poor world could proffer him. Such satisfactoriness there is in the treasures of grace! and well may it be so, for grace with assurance is no less than heaven let down into the soul. And, therefore, it is remarkable in Heb. x. 34; "Knowing in yourselves," saith the Apostle, "that ye have in heaven a better and" a more "enduring substance:" so our translation renders it; but, in the original, it is, "Know, that in yourselves you have a better and a more enduring substance in heaven:" those, that are assured of the truth of their own graces, have a heaven in themselves, a better and a more enduring substance in themselves; such discoveries of God, such sweet peace and tranquillity of soul, such overflowing joys of the Holy Ghost, that heaven itself is never able to bestow other kind of happiness than this is, though there they shall have it in fuller degrees and measure.

(2) The treasures of glory are infinitely satisfactory.

If there be so much in grace, that is but the earnest, how much more abundant satisfaction is there in glory, which is the inheritance itself! Ps. xvii. 15; "When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness." *When I awake:* that is, when I awake in glory, after a short slumber of death, then I shall be satisfied with the likeness and similitude of God.

Consider, here,

[1] The true reason of the vanity and unsatisfactoriness of all earthly things.

It is, because none of them are so good as the soul is; nor are any of them so great, as to be able to fill up the vast capacity of

the soul. The soul is like a wide gulf: throw in pleasures, and profits, and honors, nay the whole world; yet there is a vast hollowness in the soul still, that can never be filled up by these things. Your souls are of a noble and excellent being; and, excepting angels, they are the top and flower of the creation: and, therefore, it is a debasement of them to cling to any thing here that is worse than themselves. Now; so long as all things here below are less than the soul and worse than the soul, the soul cannot possibly receive satisfaction and contentment in them. But God is infinitely great; and, therefore, he can fill the soul: and God is infinitely good; and, therefore, He can satisfy the soul, so that it shall not desire any thing above or besides Him.

Consider,

[2] The soul is to be made happy, with the same happiness, wherewith God himself is to be forever blessed.

And must not this be infinitely satisfactory? Wherein doth God's infinite blessedness consist? Is it not in the close, near, intimate, and immediate enjoyment and fruition of himself? Is not God himself his own happiness? Why this also is the happiness of the saints; a close, intimate, and immediate enjoyment of God. Enlarge then, O soul: spread forth thyself wide: make room for thine own glory: thou art to be made happy, with the same happiness, that God himself is blessed with. He is blessed, in the eternal enjoyment of himself; and thou shalt be blessed, with the eternal enjoyment of God also. Enlarge then, O soul: spread forth thyself wide: stretch out thy desires as wide as heaven itself; for the God of heaven will fill them. And is not here enough to satisfy? Certainly, that soul must be very necessitous, that an Infinite God and an infinite good cannot fill up and satisfy.

And, thus, you see that heavenly treasures are satisfactory in themselves.

2. As they are satisfactory in themselves, so *they make earthly comforts and enjoyments to be satisfactory also.*

That soul, that hath laid up and made sure of heavenly treasures, finds satisfaction and contentment in every outward condition. He, that enjoys most of heaven, enjoys most of earth; though others may possess more than he: and what he hath not, contentment makes him not to want. What says the Apostle, in Phil. iv. 11? "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." And what can any man have more? If the Lord afford him but a little of these things, he is content; and, if he increaseth them too much, he can be but content. O what a blessed condition

is this, that exempts a man from a possibility of being under affliction, as to outward things!

Thus it will be with you, if you have laid up your treasure in heaven. It will satisfy you, and make every outward condition satisfactory also; and that, for two reasons.

(1) It will beget in you mean and light thoughts of all things here below.

You will rate them no higher than the Apostle doth; but *loss* and *dung:* and will any man be discontented or troubled what befals such things; what becomes of his losses, and of his dung and dross? Suppose a sweeping shower should upon a sudden fall, and wash away the loose dust that lies upon your ground, would you count this a loss of your land? would any of you be troubled at this, as being bereaved of part of your estate? Truly, to a child of God all the things of the world are no other; and, if a tempest of Providence suddenly sweeps them away, he is not troubled at it: he counts it no loss of his inheritance: the dust only is washed away, but the land is safe still. Truly, none in the world abound more with superfluities, than a saint doth. Take a wicked man, upon whom all the store and abundance of the world do empty themselves; upon whom riches, and honors, and pleasures flow in, in a full tide, and all unburden themselves into his bosom; yet, poor man! he hath no more than he needs: and it is no wonder that he calls them by great names, this thing a crown, and that thing a kingdom and treasure: alas! these poor deceits are all, that he hath to please himself with, to call little things by great and swelling names. But to a saint, that hath nothing but food and raiment, even they are superfluities, whilst God and Christ are his: and, if God casts in more to him, he values them as mercies, but not as his treasure; or, if God calls them back again, he looks upon them not as a loss, but as a riddance. If you make a thousand ciphers, yet they amount to nothing: and add a figure of one to these, still they stand but for one: such are the things of the world to a child of God: all worldly enjoyments are but as so many ciphers in his account: he reckons only upon one God; and, therefore, he is at a point how God deals with him as to these things: if he gives or if he takes away, he says, "Blessed be the name of the Lord."

Thus, beloved, if you have laid up your treasure in heaven, you will have but mean and slight thoughts of all other things besides.

(2) Treasure laid up in heaven will make all things satisfactory to you, because every condition that you are in will be to your advantage.

Nay, you will look upon any condition that you are in, as a condition of love. Every mercy, that is bestowed upon you, is a love-token sent you by a gracious Father: the soul, that once can say "God is mine," will be able to say, "This comfort and that mercy were given me from the love of God: I have his heart with it: I observed the countenance of my Father: and I saw him smile upon my soul, when he gave it me." Nay, are you deprived of these enjoyments? it is from love, and it shall be for your advantage: God saw that they lay too near your heart, and jostled him farther from his seat and throne; and he would not suffer you to make so bad an exchange, as to quit heavenly things for earthly: he takes these from thee, that so he may take thee off them, and wean thy heart from them; and that he may strengthen thy faith and dependence on himself, that he may inflame thy affections after him, and that he may exercise thy patience and humility in the want of them: nay, he then gives the clearest, and brightest, and fullest discoveries of himself, and of his love in Christ to the soul: what advantageous losses, therefore, O Christian, dost thou sustain! yea, to use the Apostle's phrase, thou hast "but gained" in "this harm and loss." And, therefore, in every state and condition, a Christian, that hath laid up his treasure in heaven, may well be content and satisfied; for all is to his advantage and gain, whatever it be.

And, so much for the third particular.

iv. Treasure laid up in heaven WILL SECURE TO YOU THE ENJOYMENT OF ALL EARTHLY COMFORTS, SO FAR AS THEY SHALL BE FOR YOUR GOOD.

This depends upon the latter part of the former particular. Our Saviour hath passed his word for it, in Mat. vi. 33; "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." First, seek the kingdom of heaven: that is, lay up first your treasure in heaven, make sure of heavenly riches first; and, then, all these things shall be added to you. When the great bargain is concluded in heaven, betwixt God and the soul, God never stands upon these petty things of earth, but throws them in, as vantage and overplus, into the bargain. Yea, and as Christ hath passed his word, so God hath given you a pawn, that so it shall be, in Rom. viii. 32; "He, that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Is the "heir of all things"

ours; and can there be any thing, that shall not be ours also? Hath God freely given you his Son; and will he think much to give you other things, which are of no value and esteem, in comparison of that great gift, Jesus Christ? Hath he given thee "hidden manna," and "angels' food;" hath he clothed thee with the robes of Christ's righteousness; and shalt thou want food and raiment? Are not these things convenient for thee? Or, doth God prize worldly things at a higher rate, than the things of heaven? thou canst not think God doth so, for thou thyself dost not prize them so. Or, doth God so much disregard them, as to take no regard to supply your outward concernments? No, says Christ, 'your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." God doth take special notice and regard of all your wants: he knows you have need of these things. Thou needest not, O Christian, therefore envy the grandees and potentates of the earth, that rustle and make a noise with their greatness: believe it, were it for thy good, thou shouldst be exalted up to their pitch and they should be brought down to lick the dust of thy feet.

Consider but these two things:

1. *All earthly things are to be accounted good or evil, only as they concern our eternal state and condition.*

You will greatly be deceived, if you look upon things as they appear in themselves. Then you will call prosperity, and riches, and worldly abundance, good things; and want, and poverty, and affliction, evil things; if you account and esteem them as they appear in themselves. But consider these things as they relate to eternity, and then poverty may be a mercy, and riches a judgment: God may bless thee by afflictions, and curse thee by prosperity: he may bestow more upon thee in suffering thee to want these things, than if he did give all the world's abundance to thee. It may be, prosperity may puff up thy soul, and make it grow more estranged from God; adversity may humble thee, and bring thy soul the nearer unto God, and so conduce more to the eternal good of thy soul: adversity, in this case, is good; and not prosperity. This present life is nothing, but a preparation for and a tendency to eternity: all that we here do, or receive, or suffer, is in order to eternity; and, therefore, all must be measured by it. That is good, that tends to our everlasting happiness, be it want or misery. Whatever it be, that increases our grace, that augments the stock of our heavenly treasure, that promotes the everlasting salvation of our souls, *that* alone is to be esteemed by us as good. What dull folly is it, for men to roll and wallow in the profits and plea-

sures of this world, and hug them as good things, when indeed they are only snares and traps to their souls; and are only given to fat them for the day of slaughter; and may every moment deliver them up to an eternity of torments, which will fearfully be heightened and enraged by the enjoyment of these things that they account good things! Abraham tells Dives, that, in his lifetime, he received "good things;" and Lazarus "evil things:" a strange dispensation of God, to bestow good things upon a hated Dives, and to inflict evil things upon a beloved Lazarus! but yet read on, Luke xvi. 25; "But now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." O, never call Dives's purple and delicious fare "good things;" for these end in torment: never call Lazarus's sores and rags "evil things;" for these end in everlasting comfort: "No," might Dives have replied with horror: "when I was 'clothed in purple and fine linen,' I then received 'evil things:' O, cursed be all my pomp and bravery: I see now the end of my purple, it was but to wrap me up in redder flames: my sumptuous fare served only to make the never-dying worm the more to feed on me: O, happy was the poverty of Lazarus, for he awaked in ease and happiness: then, was he truly happy, and not I, though I thought myself so; for, though I received an abundant measure of worldly things, yet received I no good things." This, within a while, will be the judgment of all of you, when you come to be fixed in an unalterable condition to all eternity: O, therefore, be persuaded to pass the same judgment upon them now.

Consider,

2. *If God deny any comfort or enjoyment to his people, he therefore denies it, because it is not good for them; because it will not conduce to their eternal happiness, which is the only rule and measure of earthly things.*

Psal. lxxxiv. 11; "The Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." "No good thing:" if any thing be withheld, you may conclude on it, that it is no good thing; but that it would be either prejudicial to grace and glory, or inconsistent with them, had God bestowed it upon thee: and wilt thou thyself be content, to abate the least degree of grace or glory, for the greatest accumulation of worldly enjoyments? if thou wouldst, thou never yet madest grace or glory thy treasure. In Psal. lxviii. 19, says the Psalmist, speaking of God's mercies, "Blessed be God, that daily loadeth us with benefits:" the people of God are still complaining, that they are loaded with miseries and afflictions: there is as much of these laid on them, as

possibly they can bear: but, how few are there, that take notice how God loads them with his benefits! in Exod. xvi. 18; "He, that gathered much, had nothing over; and he, that gathered little, had no lack:" so is it with the children of God: he, that hath more of these outward comforts, hath but his load; and he, that hath less, hath his load too; every one as much as he can bear: and what he hath not, God withholds, lest it should hurt him; lest it should break him, instead of adorning him. Every vessel cannot bear up with so much sail as another; and therefore God will keep it from toppling over. There is nothing, that a child of God hath not, but, if he had it, for the present it would be worse with him than now it is: and, therefore, so much as you do now wish were added to your present condition, so much you do virtually wish were taken off from your present grace and from your future glory; because God doth most wisely and exactly proportion these things here, so as that they may be most conducible and serviceable to your true happiness hereafter.

II. I come now to inquire, WHENCE IT IS, THAT THE CHILDREN OF GOD MAKE HEAVEN AND HEAVENLY THINGS THEIR TREASURE AND CHIEF GOOD?

We see that our Saviour doth here distinguish them from earthly and ungodly men by this character: one lays up on earth, and the other in heaven. He, that lays up his treasure on earth, is an earthly, ungodly man: he, that lays up his treasure in heaven, is the true Christian.

i. Here, first, take notice that THAT, WHICH MAKES ANY THING DEAR AND PRECIOUS, THAT, WHICH MAKES ANY THING TO BE A TREASURE TO THE SOUL, IS THE SUITABLENESS AND SUBSERVIENCY OF IT TO THAT SELF, THAT IS IN A MAN.

Self is the great rater of all our treasure: the value of it is reckoned according to this standard: when heaven, and earth, and all things are laid before a man, self comes in, and views them all, and sees what is useful for it, and accordingly sets a price upon it; and all things are slighted, and nothing is current with the soul, but as self hath stamped and printed its own image upon it. And, therefore, in Luke xii. 21, you find this expression: "So is he, that layeth up treasure for himself:" if any man lays up treasure, he lays it up for himself. Whatever may preserve self, whatever may answer the propensities and inclinations of self, whatever may promote the cause and interest of self, that is a man's treasure and nothing else.

ii. CARNAL AND UNREGENERATE SELF RATES EARTH AND EARTHLY THINGS AS ITS TREASURE, BECAUSE THERE IS A SUITABLENESS AND PROPORTION IN THE ONE TO THE OTHER.

Earthly treasure for an earthly self. And, therefore, the Apostle tells us, 1 Cor. vi. 13, meat is "for the belly, and the belly for meat:" that is, they are suited to each other. So are earthly things suited to carnal self; the things of this world, to a worldly mind; and a worldly mind to the things of this world. Carnal self relishes no other things: bring spiritual things to him, he tastes no sweetness in them: you may as well please a brute beast by whispering into his ears the deep discourses of reason, as you can a carnal man by the discoveries of God and Christ: talk to him of the world and of carnal concernments, his ear tastes and relishes such discourse as this is; and the reason is, because these things are accommodated and suited to that carnal unregenerate self, that is in man. The Apostle tells us, "All, that is in the world," is "the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life:" that is, pleasure, profit, and honor: all center in this, to please and maintain carnal self, as all its interest, and all its concernments; therefore, this is made by wicked men their treasure.

iii. IN THE SOUL'S CONVERSION UNTO GOD, UPON THAT GREAT CHANGE THAT IS MADE IN A MAN'S SELF, THERE WILL ALSO BE ANOTHER RATE AND VALUE SET UPON THINGS THAN FORMERLY THERE WAS.

Conversion is the great shipwreck of the old man, and all his goods.

1. *In conversion, there is a great change made in self.*

The Apostle, in Rom. vii. 17, tells us it was no more he, that did the evil which he would not, but sin that dwelt in him. Formerly, before his conversion, "It was I, that breathed out threatenings: I persecuted the Church: I raged and was mad against them: still, it was I myself, that acted then. But, since my great change, it is not I that am guilty; no, not so much as of infirmities: no, it is not I, that fail in the performance of what is good; not I, *but sin that dwelleth in me.*" So that, in conversion, there is a mighty change passeth upon self: so that a man may say it is not he, but sin; that body of corruption, that dwelleth in him. It is true, in a regenerate man there remains much of corruption, and of the old self: but yet, grace being the supreme prevailing principle, it will be *that* that gives the self to a man; and then that, which before was a man's self and was loved, now is become a traitor, and rebel, and enemy to that new self that is wrought in a Christian by regeneration.

2. *Man's self being changed, his treasure must also necessarily be changed.*

The new regenerate self cannot subsist and live upon its old treasure: all is but husks and swine's-meat to the soul now, that is begotten anew, and born of God: the seed of God dwelleth in it; and, therefore, now it looks after that, which is conformable to its divine original and constitution. What the Apostle presseth upon the Colossians, in Col. iii. 1; "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above," is truly the necessary practice of every heaven-born soul: whoever is born again, whoever is risen with Christ, will infallibly seek the things that are above. He will do it: there is a natural instinct in the new creature, that carries it out naturally to spiritual and heavenly objects: as the infant, that is new-born, doth by instinct seek after the breast, though it never before received nourishment that way; so the new-born Christian, that hath imprinted upon it the divine nature, hath such an impulse and instinct in it, that naturally moves it to spiritual objects, as the only suitable nourishment and good for the soul: and, therefore, to intimate the tenderness of this new infancy, the Apostle tells us, "as new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word:" the new-born babe receives nourishment no longer from the navel; and so the new-born Christian no longer creeps upon his belly, and licks the dust of the earth, but feeds upon and desires the sincere milk of the word. "That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit," and therefore will long and breathe after that which is spiritual; because it is spiritual, and bears a proportion to its own being. In John vi. 63, says Christ, "The words, that I speak, they are spirit and they are life:" that is, they are able to maintain you in life, that you may live upon them as sustenance: why so? because they are spirit and life: they are spiritual words suited to a spiritual soul, to a soul that is born again of the Spirit; and therefore fit to nourish you, and such as will keep you alive. Look, as the angels live, so lives a Christian's spiritual part: it is the same good, that is common to both; and that, which they both desire, embrace, and twine about: can you bribe an angel, by all the profits of the world? can you effeminate him, by all the pleasures of the world? can you elevate and puff him up, by all the honors and dignities of the world? no; all these things are below his nature, and he cannot descend to them: they are not suitable to him: he lives in his God, and eternally suns himself in the light of the beams of his countenance. So lives the new creature also: it is spiritual; and, therefore, clasps only about spiritual things: the world bears

no more affinity and proportion to the spiritual part of a Christian, than it doth to angels: but bring God, "the Father of spirits," and here both angels and it cling about the divine essence, and nestle themselves about him forever, and fill and satisfy themselves in him: here is meat suitable to their natures; a spiritual God, for spiritual things. Indeed, sometimes the carnal part may throw in so much earth and rubbish, that may for a time bury the new creature under it; but, when it is in its own element, it never ceaseth heaving and working, till it hath got above earth, and got into the enjoyment of its God again.

So then, because the soul is not self-sufficient, because it is an indigent creature, therefore it must have the addition of some other good to it, to eke out and supply its defects. And because the indigent and necessitated soul hath, in regeneration, a supernatural principle implanted in it, therefore spiritual and heavenly objects only comply with and suit it. These, therefore, are the treasure of the soul: and you see whence it is, that the soul doth account heavenly and spiritual things to be its treasure; because suited to that heavenly and spiritual principle, that is implanted in the soul in conversion.

Now, these things are its treasure:

(1) God himself.

So God tells out, and gives himself unto Abraham, Gen. xv. 1; "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." So David reckons up to you, what a large and great estate he had, in the possession and enjoyment of God, in Ps. xvi. 5: "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot."

(2) Jesus Christ is its treasure also.

"Buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich." Rev. iii. 18. His blood, his righteuosness, his merit, are an inexhaustible treasure; and all become ours, upon which we may live and subsist. "In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge:" but what is this to us? yes, these treasures of wisdom, that are hid in him, are made over unto us also: 1 Cor. i. 30: "He of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." Oh, how rich is a true Christian, that hath such a treasury; and such a treasure, as Christ is, to be his treasure! You find, Heb. xi. 26, that Moses esteemed "the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures in Egypt:" certainly, if the reproach of Christ be such a treasure, what then is Christ himself; and all those glorious benefits, that do accrue unto the soul in and by him?

(3) The promises also are a Christian's treasure.

They are the veins, wherein this gold runs; the mines, wherein this unsearchable treasure is: and the work of faith upon the promises, is, to stamp this golden ore into ready money, for the present necessity of the soul: so faith lives on the promises.

(4) A Christian's graces also are his treasure.

Yea, though "we have this treasure in earthen vessels;" yet is it heavenly and precious treasure. Yea, though there be much dross mixed with this gold; yet, still, it is precious faith, rich love, firm hope, tried patience. Yea, every grace, that shines in a Christian, is glorious: the crown of grace, as well as the crown of glory, hath not a sparkle in it, but what is more precious than the world itself.

These are a Christian's treasure.

III. I come now to make some IMPROVEMENT of this; to bring down what hath been said to some practical use.

USE i. Hast thou so rich a treasure laid up in heaven? Then, O Christian, BE CONSCIOUS OF THINE OWN WORTH. Henceforth know thyself to be no contemptible person.

Shall worldly men ruffle, and brave it, and think none comparable to them, only because their heap of dung is bigger than another's? And shalt thou be low and abject-spirited, that hast God himself for thy portion, and Christ for thy husband? Indeed, if you will value yourselves according to the world's estimation of you, then you are no better than the dross and dung of the world, and "the off-scouring of all things." But see how the Scripture accounts of poor, persecuted, despised Christians: Heb. xi. 37; "They wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented?" a strange generation of despicable persons! but, says the Holy Ghost, "of whom the world was not worthy." And how doth David prize them, and call them, the excellent ones of the earth: Ps. xvi. 3! My delight is in the saints, and in the excellent ones of the earth! Therefore, O Christian, begin to know thyself. Know what great relations thou hast: thou art no less than the son of a Great King. Know thy great possessions: thou hast no less, at present, than the love and favor of God; and every thing thou hast, thou hast it with a blessing; yea, though thou hast nothing in the world besides afflictions, yet thou hast that nothing with a blessing; and thou rather enjoyest, than sufferest, those afflictions, that lie upon thee. Know thy great reversions also: thou art an heir of glory, a co-heir with Jesus Christ; and, what he hath pur-

chased for himself, he hath also purchased for thee: and thou, in due time, shalt be instated into that inheritance, whereof Jesus Christ is heir, and thou also shalt be co-heir. Wilt thou now, who hast so vast a treasure as this amounts to, go drooping and disconsolate, as a helpless and hopeless person, when thou wantest nothing less than to pity those that scorn thee? Let the world know, that a Christian hath self-sufficiency; and that, at all times; and that he can live plentifully and splendidly upon his own stock: let the world know and see this by thy conversation. It was a noble and gallant speech of St. Paul, when he stood in bonds and fetters before king Agrippa, who sat upon the judgment-seat to sentence him: "Would to God," says he, "that thou wert *such* a one *as I am*:" what! such a prisoner as thou art? a strange compliment for a prisoner to use to a judge! yet you see how he values himself: he was not dazzled with Agrippa's crown and pomp, and all that fancy that he came with into the judgment-hall: for he said not, "Would I were as thou art!" but, "*Would to God!* thou wert *such* a one *as I am*, and then thou wouldst be truly happy."

This is the value, that every true Christian should set upon himself, when he is assured of the truth of his graces. He should not count any man in the world better than himself, This is to honor grace.

Use ii. Let the world hence learn also, to beware, how they despise the meanest of God's children.

Men are apt to esteem others, according to their visible estate in the things of this world: and, if here they be low and poor, they trample upon them as vile and inconsiderable. But, let such know, that every one of these slighted and despised ones is a great and rich person: they are rich towards God: they are God's jewels and peculiar treasure; and God also is their treasure and portion for evermore. It is wealth, I confess, that makes all the noise and bustle in the world; and challenges all honor as due to itself alone: says Solomon, "The rich hath many friends:" well, let respect go by wealth; we are content to go and stand by this trial. Solomon tells us, "The heart of the wicked is little worth:" it is of no price nor value; and shall his estate be of worth and value, when his heart is not? The poorest Christian may vie estates with all the world: let the world drop down millions of gold and silver, boundless revenues, and crowns and sceptres: a poor contemptible Christian comes and lays down one God against all these, and beggars them: and shall this great and mighty Christian be contemned and

slighted? You do not know him, now; but, hereafter, you shall see him sitting on a throne, clothed with robes of glory and awful majesty; daunting the grandees of the world, who shall then stand shivering before him, while he boldly sets his hand to the sentence of their damnation, and sends them to hell with a shout: how will they, with horror then cry out, "Is this that poor and despicable creature, that we mocked and despised? Behold, how he is exalted, and we are thrown down to hell." Certainly, you will have other esteem and opinions of men at the last and great day, than now you have: those, that are honorable now, will be despicable; and those, that are despicable now, will be truly honorable, if they belong to Christ.

Use iii. This might also serve TO DISCHARGE THUNDER IN THE FACES OF ALL THOSE, WHO ARE SO FAR FROM LAYING UP TREASURE IN HEAVEN, THAT THEY LAY UP TREASURE IN HELL.

Such treasures as these are, the Apostle speaks of, in Rom. ii. 5, who, after the hardness and impenitence of their hearts, treasure up unto themselves "wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." Such, who sin as though the ephah of their iniquities would never be full enough, and the heap of their sins never great enough; let these know, that, when they have done treasuring up sin, then God will begin to empty the treasures of his wrath and indignation upon them. For every sin they commit, God sets down so much wrath upon their scores; and he will be sure to pay them all, at the last day, to the full.

Use iv. Which is *the* use I principally intend; and that is for EXAMINATION.

Let us now put it to the inquiry: "What is it, that we make our treasure? What is it, that we account our good things?" Our Saviour, I told you, hereby distinguishes between wicked men and the children of God: the one lays up his treasure in heaven; the other, on earth: and, therefore, the query is, What is thy treasure? It is of great weight and moment.

Now, because usually a man's treasure is kept hid and secret, therefore we must the more inquisitively enter into the search of it: and, before the search be thoroughly made, few men, I fear, will be found rich and substantial men; but, more especially, those, that glitter most in the world, will be found to be but poor and despicable creatures.

1. Therefore, *take that character, that our Saviour gives in the text: Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

Put it now to the question: Where are your hearts? Truly, man's heart is not in his own keeping: no; but it will go along with his treasure; and where that is, this will be also. And, therefore, says the Prophet, speaking of them that made worldly things their treasure, "their hearts run after their covetousness." Worldly possessions were their treasure; and their hearts did run after them, in covetous desires of them. The worldling seals up his heart, in the same bag with his treasure: and a child of God sends his heart to heaven before him, where it lies as a precious *depositum* among all the rest of his treasure; and, when he comes to heaven, there he finds his heart among all those precious things that he shall enjoy. That, which thy heart is most busied about and most taken up with, is thy treasure. Dive down now into the bottom of thy heart, and see how the musings and imaginations thereof do work: are they chained only to the things of this world? do they trudge to and fro, every one of them laden only with burdens of earth? and, when they come thronging about thee, do they buzz nothing in thine ears but intelligence, either from some base lust or some worldly profit? If this be the constant and only employment of thy thoughts, assure thyself thy treasure is not laid up in heaven: no, nor on earth; but, which is worse, it is laid up in hell. The thoughts of a child of God are still taking wing, and flying upward towards heaven; and every one of them carries up his heart, richly fraught with divine grace: one thought is laden with the actings of faith; another, with the actings of hope; another, with the actings of love: and they never leave ascending, till they get into the presence of God, and lay their rich treasure in his bosom: and God again fills them with heavenly treasure; and bids one thought carry a smile to the soul, and tell the soul how dear it is to him; by another thought, he conveys strength; and, by another, comfort; and sends all away laden with precious treasure to the soul. If your thoughts traffic only in the world, your treasure is there; if in heaven, then your treasure is in heaven.

But you will say, "How can we judge of our treasure by our thoughts? Is not the far greater swarm of every man's thoughts vain and sinful?"

I answer: It is true they are so. Some are vain and sinful, some are idle and impertinent: some are worldly: and some are

wicked; and few, comparatively, are the holy and spiritual thoughts, that any man sends up to heaven. We must not, therefore, judge by the crowd or numerousness of our thoughts; but, by the entertainment which they find in our affections, by the stay and abode which they make in our hearts. Jer. iv. 14; "How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?" It is not, what the sudden flashings of our thoughts are; though that indeed should deeply humble us: but, mark what it is that thy heart fixes and dwells upon; from what flowers these intellectual bees, thy thoughts, suck most sweetness and honey: when thy thoughts have been foraging abroad, and bring home some sin, and present it before thee, doth thy heart rise against it, and shut it out of doors, and dost thou shut thy heart upon it? but, when thy thoughts bring home God and Christ, and the things of heaven and eternity in their arms, do thy affections clasp and twine about them? doth thy heart enlarge and expatiate to entertain them? dost thou give up thyself, in full strength and latitude, to such heavenly thoughts as these are? This is a good sign that thy treasure is laid up in heaven, because thou art so much there thyself.

But others again will say, "My thoughts are necessarily taken up with the world: my calling devours them; so that I have no opportunity to sequester myself for heavenly meditation: must I therefore be excluded from having my treasure in heaven, because my thoughts are necessarily employed in the world?"

I answer:

First. Thoughts, of all things in the world, are most free.

There is no man's calling doth so confine him, but, were his heart and affections heavenly and spiritual, his thoughts would force a passage through the crowd of worldly businesses, to heaven. Ejaculations are swift messengers, that need not much time to deliver their errand, nor much time to return again to the soul. You may point your earthly employments with heavenly meditations, as men do their writings with stops; every now and then sending up a thought unto heaven: and such pauses are no hindrance to our earthly affairs.

Secondly. It is the property of grace and holiness, when there are no actual explicit thoughts of God, then to be habitually in the fear of God; possessing the heart and overawing it, that it shall not do any thing that is sinful or unbecoming a Christian.

And therefore says the Wise Man, excellently, Prov. xxiii. 17;

"Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long." Whatever business you have, the fear of the Lord may constantly abide, overawe, and possess your heart.

Thirdly. Observe how your thoughts work, when you have vacancy and remission from your employments.

Are they spiritual, then? Do they betake themselves to God? Do they lock up themselves in their heavenly treasure? Dost thou spiritually improve the times of thy leisure? David called to mind his "song in the night," and his "spirit made diligent search:" when he awaked, he was ever with God: he slept, with God in his thoughts; and he awaked with God again, in his thoughts. Whatever employments a man hath, he hath some time of leisure. When thou hast been drudging in the world, and hast gotten a little vacancy and freedom from it, dost thou spend that little time in the thoughts of God and of the things of eternity? or, do the world and the things of the world interpose and take up thy thoughts? if so, how canst thou say thy treasure is there, when thy thoughts and thy heart are never there? as Delilah said unto Samson, "How canst thou say, I love thee, when thy heart is not with me?" Judg. xvi. 15; so, how canst thou say, that thy treasure is in heaven, when thy heart and thy thoughts are not there?

2. A second mark, whereby you may know where your treasure is, is this: *That which bears the chief sway and command in a man's affections, is a man's treasure.*

Affections are the wings of the soul, that carry it forth to its several objects: and these move to nothing more swiftly, strongly, and constantly, than to what is the soul's treasure. When your souls take these wings and fly abroad, follow them, and see what it is upon which they light: as the eagle will hover over the carcass, so the affections will be still hovering over the soul's treasure: see now whither it is your desire and love, your joy and delight, do carry you forth. Is it only to the things of this world? certainly if these wings be clotted only with mire and dirt, if they only flutter up and down the surface of the earth and mount up no higher, your treasure is not a heavenly treasure. The affections of the children of God still ascend upwards; and bear up their hearts with them, till they lodge in that Divine bosom where first they were enkindled: I need not tell those happy ones, what it is to have their hearts so extended in love to God and the things of God, as to cause a kind of loss, pain, and torture: what it is to have that joy springing up in the soul, that is unutterable; yea, such insupportable joys, as

have melted them into ecstacies. How infinitely would they now disdain, that any soul should be so grossly foolish, as to prefer the world before, or equalize it with, God! ten thousand worlds are not so much to them, as one momentary glimpse of God, in communion with him: nay, they think their happiness so great, that, though they do believe, yet they cannot conceive how it should be more and greater in heaven itself. Then the soul claps its wings, and fain would take its flight and be gone: it breathes, and breaks, and pants after God. See what an agony holy David was in: Ps. xlii. 1, 2; "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" Indeed the whole Psalm is the most mournful and pathetic composition in all the Scripture, of a heart, that beats and throbs after God, with vehement love and desire after the enjoyment of him: and whence was this, but because God was the portion and treasure of his soul! he was "the health of" his "countenance, and" his "God:" v. 11. Wheresoever God and the things of God are made the soul's treasure, there will be proportionable affections drawn out to these things. Never was it known, that a treasure wanted affections.

"But alas," may some say, "I fear then that I have no share in this heavenly treasure. Never was I so strongly affected with the discoveries of God and Christ and the things of heaven, never was I so taken and ravished, as with some temporal mercies and enjoyments. I could never feel such transports of spirit in communion with God, as you speak of; no such ravishings of love, nor such meltings and vehemence of desires for the things of heaven, as I have often found for the concerns and in the enjoyments of the world. Never do I remember, that I rejoiced so vehemently in God, as in some new unexpected mercy; or that ever I mourned so bitterly for sinning against God, or for the hiding of the light of God's countenance from me, as I have done for some cross outward providence: and how then can I say, my treasure is laid up in heaven, since earth and the things of earth have the sway and pre-eminence in my affections?"

This may, possibly, trouble some.

To this, therefore, I answer, That there are two things, by which the predominance and sway of a man's affections may be judged.

By their violent passionateness:

By their judicious valuation and esteem.

Thou complainest, that earth and earthly things have the predominance and sway in thy affections. But look what sort of affections they are: are they only thy fondlings, thy violent and passionate affections? this may be so, and yet heavenly things be thy treasure. Many times, so it is, that, what is superior in these may be inferior, nay almost contemptible, in thy rational and judicious affections. Men may be fond of those persons, for whom they have not such solid and judicious affections, as they have for others. So is it here: a Christian's fondness may be more to the things of this world; when yet his judicious affections may be far more to the things of heaven.

"But how shall we try this?"

(1) Observe, as you must not judge of your value and esteem of earthly things by your passionate affections to them; so neither must you judge of your valuing heavenly things, by your speculative judgment of them.

It is not enough, when you compare heavenly things with earthly, barely to pronounce heavenly things to be infinitely better and more desirable than earthly. Truly, every man's conscience tells him thus much. There is no man, whoever he be, that thinks of heaven, but is withal verily persuaded, that it is infinitely more glorious than earth is; and, that the enjoyment of God, a crown of life and immortality, is infinitely more to be preferred than all the trash and trifles here below. And there is no worldling, when his conscience beckons him aside and whispers these things in his ears, but is convinced, and assents unto these things as truths: and yet this man's treasure is not therefore laid up in heaven, because he judges, in his speculative judgment, that heavenly things are better than earthly: this is to say they are better, and to judge them so; but not to esteem and value them so.

And, therefore,

(2) The true valuation of heavenly things as the soul's treasure, lies in the practical part of the soul.

Valuation is a practical thing. I cannot be said to value an object, unless that esteem hath some influence upon my actions, as relating to that object: either it will put me on endeavors to obtain it, or stir up care in me to keep it. Mark that place in St. Peter: 1 Pet. ii. 7; "Unto you, which believe, he is precious: but unto them, which be disobedient".....he is "a rock of offence:" in the 6th verse, he tells us, Christ was precious in himself: "I lay in Sion a.....corner-stone, elect, precious:" in the 4th verse, he tells us, he was precious to God, "chosen of God, and precious:" and in the

7th verse, he comes to show what esteem men had of him: to believers, saith he, "he is" also "precious; but unto them, which be disobedient".....he is "a rock of offence." What is the reason, when he opposes wicked men to believers, that he calls them disobedient persons, and not rather unbelievers? the reason is, because we must not look to men's outward acknowledgment, whereby they judge what is precious to them; for all will so pronounce God, and Christ, and the things of heaven, in their speculative judgment: they will pass this sentence: but you must look to their practice, and see what influence this valuation hath there. And, thus, Christ is not precious to unbelievers, because that esteem they have of him doth not enforce them to obedience to him.

Examine, therefore, which hath most influence upon your life and practice: whether your passionate affections for the things of this life, or your judicious and deliberate affections for the things of heaven; for, thereby, you may, in part, guess what is your treasure. A small torrent runs very violently, and makes a loud noise; yet hath not that strength in it that a river hath, though it move silently. So it is with the affections of a child of God: though they may run out violently towards the things of the world; yet have they not that strength in them, which there is in his sober affections for the things of heaven.

How violent soever your affections be to temporal mercies; suppose friends, children, or estate, or the like: yet if you do value and esteem heavenly things as your treasure, this valuation and esteem will have the sway and pre-eminence in two things especially.

[1] It will enforce the soul to use more diligence and care to increase its spiritual treasure, than to increase any temporal good thing whatever.

That is a man's treasure, to which he is still adding and throwing one precious thing after another; nor will he ever think it can be too full and too rich. And therefore you have that expression, in 2 Pet. i. 5–7; "Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity." See here how the Apostle strings up these pearls. Now, what is it you are most careful and industrious to add unto? Truly, that, which most men make their business, is to add house to house, and land to land, that they may dwell alone upon the earth. Suppose we had lived in Solomon's time, when silver and gold were as common as stones in the street, if one should spend all his time in gathering up straws and

feathers, could you in reason think, that he made gold his treasure? yet this is the foolish and busy care of worldly men, that, though they might gather up that which is far more precious than gold and silver; yet they rather employ themselves in picking up straws and feathers, and think with them to build their own nest.. But, there is a holy covetousness in a child of God, that makes him still to be gathering up heavenly riches: still, he is adding grace to grace: and, though he thinks, to be the meanest Christian in the world is more worth than the world; yet he would not be content to be the meanest. As to outward respects, he is well content to keep the station wherein Providence hath set him: if he stand at a stay in worldly enjoyments, it is no great trouble to him. But he cannot bear standing at a stay in grace: there, he must be growing and thriving, and going forward: let his affections be set ever so eagerly upon his outward comforts, yet he is not so eager to increase them as he is his heavenly treasure.

And, that it is so, appears in two things:

1st. In that he sets a higher price upon opportunities, to increase his heavenly treasure, than upon any other seasons and opportunities whatever.

O, what gain and enriching doth he make on a market-day for his soul! Sabbaths to him are precious: ordinances to him are precious: why? but, because, in them, he sees the glory of Christ displayed, and the fulness of the promises unfolded? because, by them, his faith is strengthened, his love is inflamed, his hope confirmed? He goes far more wealthy from them, than he came to them; and therefore it is an argument, that he labors to increase his heavenly treasure, because he sets a higher price and value upon opportunities, to increase that treasure, than he doth upon any other whatever.

2dly. It appears, in that he is willing to stand at a stint in outward enjoyments, but he cannot bear a stint in grace.

He cannot live upon a set allowance there. Let God deal how he pleaseth with him in outward things, let him reduce him to a morsel of bread and to a cup of water, it is enough; so he gives him but a Benjamin's portion in himself: let him seize upon all his temporals and take them away, if so be he doth but instate him in a great possession of spirituals, he is content. "My body," says he, "can subsist upon a little; but my soul cannot. My spiritual charges and expenses are great, and multiply upon me daily: I have many strong temptations to be resisted, and many prevailing corruptions to be mortified, and many holy and spiritual duties to

be performed; and how shall I be able to defray all this with no better a supply? my present stock is not able to maintain it." Still he is complaining, that he hath too little to maintain him in his work, that he may be such a Christian as he aims at and would be: and, therefore, he cries out, "Lord, though I thank thee for what I do possess, yet I still crave more of thyself: "Thou art infinite, and what is it to enjoy a little of an infinite God? More of thy Son: he is all-sufficient: and what is it to have an insufficient portion in an all-sufficient Saviour? More of thy grace: that is free: and what is it to enjoy a limited portion of unlimited and boundless grace?" This is the property of heavenly riches, that they make them that have them still to be covetous after more: the worldling adds heap to heap: and the Christian adds grace to grace, and one degree of grace to another; and thinks he hath attained to nothing, till he hath attained so far, as that there is nothing farther to be attained; and therefore he goes on laboring after more, till he doth insensibly ripen into glory, and hath nothing more to desire. If you value heavenly things now as your treasure, you will still be adding to this treasure; growing every day richer towards God than before.

[2] And, then, if you do practically value and esteem heavenly things as your soul's treasure, you will sooner part with all other comforts and enjoyments, than with this.

It may be, you cannot say that ever you felt such thrills of joy and delight in the enjoyment of God, as you have done in some outward mercy: you never felt such comfort in spiritual mercies, as you have in some outward comforts, that providentially were bestowed upon you: and, therefore, you have cause to fear, that your treasure is here below, and not above. But this is still to judge by the passionateness of your affections, that is as a disturbed water which cannot reflect your face aright. If you would judge truly, then put this question to your soul: "Soul, now that thou dost so vehemently delight in this comfort and in that enjoyment, which wouldst thou rather part with: this delightful comfort or, thy God?" Certainly, a child of God would have a holy indignation against himself, should he but debate the question. "Oh," will he say, "though God take every thing from me but himself, yet he leaves me enough to make me happy; and, in the enjoyment of other things, I were truly miserable, could I be made so by their loss." A saint's rational affections, consisting in the due valuation and esteem of heavenly things, will triumph over his more eager and passionate affections to the things of the world.

Think with thyself now what is dearest to thee in the world, and then set God and heaven in the balance against them; and then thou shalt see, though earthly comforts may engross too much of thy affections and lie near thy heart, yet that God and heavenly things still have the greatest sway and predominance in thy affections, if thou dost truly value them. And, so, for the commission of a sin: it may be, some outward affliction may cost thee more passionate grief and tears, than the commission of sin hath done: thou never mournedst, it may be, so bitterly for thy offending God, as thou hast done for God's afflicting thee; and this thou lookest upon as a bad sign that thy affections are not so much to the honor of God, as to outward comforts and prosperity: yea, but let me ask thee, wouldst thou rather fall into the same affliction, or commit the same sin again? certainly, if thou art a saint, thou wilt soon resolve the question; "No misery or plague is so great as sin; and, though it be my folly thus passionately to lament under this cross and affliction, yet I would rather bear it, yea I would rather bear whatever God can lay on me, than knowingly to commit the least sin against my God." This is the judgment of a child of God: and, therefore, Job makes it the character of a hypocrite, that he chooseth iniquity rather than affliction.

And so much for the second mark or character.

(3) See *what it is that you most trust unto and live upon, when all other things fail you.* That, certainly, is your treasure.

Men usually reserve their treasure to be their support at the last pinch and extremity. See the case of Asaph: Ps. lxxiii. 26; "My flesh and my heart faileth:" and must not he therefore fail? hath he anything else to support him? Yes: now comes in relief from his treasure: "But God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever;" he is my treasure; a treasure that will never fail me, and that never can be spent: he is my portion forever. And, thus, every child of God, when other things fail him, when other props are taken from under him, will then support himself from his God, that is his portion forever. Micah had a true notion of God, though falsely applied to idols: "Ye have taken away my gods.....and what have I more?" Judg. xviii. 24. Take from a saint all worldly comforts and all earthly enjoyments; and, if you ask him what he hath more, he can truly say, "Yes: still I have more than I have lost: I have my God left me still." But, were it possible that his God should be taken from him, then indeed what hath he more? he hath nothing then left him, to support him and to live upon. Can you, therefore, in all your dis-

tresses, find relief and comfort in your God? can you, when all props fail you, betake yourselves to him; and find enough in him to support and bear up yourselves, when you have nothing in the world to depend upon? can you then find enough in him, to live comfortably and splendidly? If so, it is a sign God is your treasure. When all other things fail, God comes in as the relief and support of that soul, that makes him to be his treasure.

4. Look, not only what it is which you value in itself; but *that by which and according to which, you value both yourselves and others.* That is your treasure.

And, here, I shall lay down two things.

(1) If the soul hath assurance, and knows beyond all doubt and mistake, that heavenly treasure is his, he will value himself according to that treasure.

"Would to God," says the Apostle to king Agrippa, "that thou wert such a one as I am." And so, 1 Cor. xv., when he had spoken of himself in the 9th verse, "I am the least of the apostles.....not meet to be called an apostle;" there he values himself as in himself: but yet, in the 10th verse, "By the grace of God I am what I am:" and what was that? why, says he, This grace received I "not in vain, but I labored more abundantly than they all:" low was his esteem of himself; considered in himself, "less than the least of the apostles:" but, considering himself in respect of grace, "By grace," says he, "I am what I am;" and I am such a one also, as have received grace to labor more than all of them. And so, Jer. ix. 23, 24; "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches:" he excludes all boasting from themselves; "But, let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he.....knoweth me, that I am the Lord:" let him value and esteem himself according to that. Now, do you not prize yourselves by some outward privileges or worldly advantages? do you not think yourselves somebody, because you have riches and estates, or the like? do you account yourselves nothing worth, more than what you are in respect of grace, more than what you are in respect of your interest in God, and in that heavenly treasure and riches? This is a sign, that you do indeed make heavenly things to be your treasure, when you rate yourselves so much worth as you have of that treasure.

(2) If the soul want assurance, and so cannot value itself according to its interest in that heavenly treasure; if it cannot see its right and title to this heavenly treasure, then it values others according to their interest in that treasure.

It is not according to their estates or honor in the world, but according to what they have of Christ, and God, and heavenly things. A child of God, that values heavenly things as his treasure will value the men that have this treasure and these riches.

USE v. Several characters have been laid before you, for the examination of yourselves, whether you do value heaven and heavenly things as your treasure. If now by those characters you have taken an account of your estate, you either find yourselves rich in this heavenly treasure, or not. If you cannot say, God and Christ and the great and glorious things of eternity are yours; if you doubt that heaven is your exchequer, and of all that rich and precious treasure it contains there is any thing that you can call yours; let me then direct you to a twofold word of EXHORTATION.

That, above all gettings, you would chiefly labor to get a portion in this heavenly treasure.

That you would never rest satisfied, till you have got a full assurance that this treasure is yours, and that you are enriched by it.

The one, is to them, that are indeed poor; but think themselves rich and increased in goods, and to stand in need of nothing.

The other, is to them, that are indeed rich; but yet think themselves poor and miserable.

1. To *them, that have no share in this heavenly treasure.*

Is there such an infinite mass of riches exposed, not to sale, but to gift; riches inestimable, invaluable, and unsearchable; such riches, that he, who would worthily describe them, must first enjoy a translation, and learn the tongue of an angel to speak whole God at every word? and shall not this stir up and quicken your desires to get these riches? What! Sirs, is there not a covetous person among you all? Is there not one, that cares how to be rich? Is wealth grown such a vile and contemptible thing with you, as to stand in need of other exhortations and motives besides itself, to commend it to your acceptance? No, certainly, riches have not lost their allurements, nor have men lost their covetousness. If I should tell you this day, of rich purchases and large donations, of gainful bargains and the speediest and easiest way to grow great in the world, and of invaluable treasures that you might have for fetching; how would most men's ears drink in such golden eloquence as this is! "Oh, where, and how?" would be the question of all of you.

What then is the reason, that, when we set before you the glorious excellencies of this heavenly treasure, the least dust and

filings of which are enough to bankrupt all that the world calls precious; since it gives no less than crowns, robes, and scepters, God, and Christ, and glory, and immortality: what is the reason, that men's hearts generally are so frozen and cold towards these things? Why are they not covetous and earnest, in seeking after these things?

Truly, the grand comprehensive reason is flat atheism. As many as are careless of this heavenly treasure, so many atheists are there in the world. Saint Paul hath told us, that he, that is covetous of earthly things, is an idolater: I may tell you, he that is not covetous after heavenly things, he is a flat atheist.

But, more particularly;

(1) Men are not thoroughly convinced that there is indeed such a treasure; or that this treasure is so rich, and so precious and glorious as it is described.

And why is this, but because it is hidden treasure? Here they see what pomp and advantages earthly riches bring with them; but they never saw the state, that an angel keeps; they never saw the glory of "the spirits of just men made perfect:" they never saw the court and attendance of the Eternal King: they have heard, indeed, mighty and strange things concerning all these; but what shall they do, if they prove but dreams and fancies? and why then should they trouble themselves about uncertainties? possibly they are such as are described; possibly, they are not. Truly, these are men's atheistical principles; and, though they dare not own and profess it, yet this is at the bottom of all that deadness and indifference, that is in most men to the things of heaven. Now, although the bare possibility of the truth of these glorious things, and the little danger there is in attempting to obtain them, might prevail with rational men to put them upon earnest endeavors after them; yet, carnal desires and earthly affections striking in with these loose atheistical and carnal opinions concerning the certainty of these glorious discoveries, they sway them so powerfully to earthly things, that all their thoughts and care and contrivances are laid out upon them, to the neglect, yea to the contempt of heavenly and spiritual things: Ps. xiv. 1; "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God:" it was but in his heart: it was but a thin film of a thought, that scarce arrived at the form of a conception; yet see how this hath influence into his life: "They are corrupt: they have done abominable works: there is none, that doeth good." Oh, beware, therefore, that you never entertain a thought in the leastwise derogatory to the infinite glory of heaven: doubting or

unworthy thoughts of heaven will insensibly make you careless in your endeavors after it: be, therefore, firm and unshaken in this belief, that heavenly glory is unsearchable, that heavenly riches are invaluable: yea, believe that whatever belongs to heaven is before and beyond all that is here below: the more the eye, though but of a historical faith, discovers and sees of these things, the more will the hand labor and be diligent to obtain them.

(2) Another reason why men do not labor after this heavenly treasure, is, because they are not thoroughly convinced, that they stand in need of this heavenly treasure.

They say, with the church, Rev. iii. 17, that they are "rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." They know not, and therefore they care not for looking after, this heavenly treasure. They do not see their need of grace to sanctify them, their need of mercy to justify them, their need of the promises to support them, and their need of Christ to save them. Who is it, that cries out, they are undone, eternally undone, without these things? Who is it, that is sensible of these things? They think a little of these things will go far, and what they have already is enough: and it is altogether as hard to make these men discontented with the poverty of their spiritual condition, as it is to make them contented with the abundance and fulness of their temporal condition. Oh, that men were but once awakened to see the necessity that they stand in of this heavenly treasure!

But how should they be awakened?

Consider,

[1] The great cost and expense, which you must be at, if you will be saved.

It is true, if you resolve to perish, as poor as now you are, yet you are too rich a prey for the devil: but, if you intend happiness and your own salvation, you must have a large and rich stock to trade withal. A poor and beggarly professor will never set up in Christianity: no, salvation is a costly thing: many powerful corruptions must be subdued: many divine graces must be acted: many holy duties must be performed: and what have you with which to bear out all this charge? See that expression, Titus iii. 8, that they "be careful to maintain good works:" such good works, he means, as are conducible to salvation: to maintain such good works is so great a charge, as will beggar all the ability of nature, if you have not a heavenly treasure to defray it. You cannot, by the power of nature and all natural endowments, maintain good works: are

they able to act faith, and love, and patience, and humility, and self-denial? I know it is both easy and pleasant, to think and hope that you shall be saved; but, sit down first, and consider what it will cost you: can your present stock carry you through good and evil report, through reproaches and afflictions? will it carry you through all? if not, will you yet say, you are "rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing?" Be convinced, therefore, that you are poor and insufficient creatures; and that you stand in need of abundance of supply from this heavenly treasure, to discharge this cost and expense that you must be at, if ever you will be saved.

Consider,

[2] The desperate debts you have contracted with the justice of God, and the deep arrears into which you have run with the wrath and vengeance of God: and how do you think to clear your account without a vast and infinite treasure to defray it?"

Suppose God should take every sinner, this day before him, by the throat; and say to him, "Wretch! pay me what thou owest me: I will give thee no longer time."

"Pay thee, Lord! why, what is that I owe thee?"

1st. "Thou owest me huge and vast sums for all the temporal mercies thou enjoyest. Thou vauntest it in the world, as though none were so great as thou art: yea, but thou hast paid for nothing that thou hast. Here is so much upon the account, for thy estate; and so much for credit and reputation: so much, for protection and preservation; yea, for thy life and soul: yea, thou owest me for all. Pay me now for all these; yea, and the utmost farthing too for all these debts: or, else, lie forever in hell."

O, that worldly-minded men would but seriously consider, that none of the good things which they now enjoy are upon free-cost: there must and will certainly come an after-reckoning: and then, perhaps, they will say, it is one of the worst bargains they made in their whole lives, when they were content to grow rich, when this after-reckoning comes and God shall call them, to pay for all the mercies and enjoyments that he lent them.

2dly. Thou owest God for many thousands of sins and provocations against him, for which thou must make recompence and satisfaction.

And therefore sins are called debts: "Forgive us our debts." And how many thousand talents art thou thus indebted to God! Every sin is a talent of lead, for its weight, to sink the soul deep into hell; but it is a talent of gold, for its price and satisfaction.

God's law is transgressed: and how canst thou recompense it? his wrath is provoked: and how canst thou atone it? thy soul is forfeited to endless torments: and how canst thou redeem it? "The redemption of the soul is precious, and it ceaseth forever."

Tell me now, O Sinner, art thou rich enough in thyself to discharge all these debts? canst thou pay God, to the full, for every mercy thou hast received? canst thou satisfy him, to the full, for every sin thou hast committed? dost thou think still, that thou hast no need of a treasure to discharge all these? Possibly, by this time, thou art convinced that thou standest in need of a treasure: but, it may be, thou thinkest there is none rich enough to do all this. Truly, there is none, but the treasure of the infinite merit of Christ: who, for those that believe on him, hath paid off all their score: so that neither God's mercies, nor yet their own sins, shall ever be charged upon them to their condemnation. They can plead, "Lord, here is a full price, the precious blood of thine own Son. It was, indeed, thine own free grace that bestowed him upon us, who is such a boundless treasure: but, being instated in that, we do no longer desire to deal with thee upon terms of grace; but upon most severe, rigorous, and strict justice. What mercies we have had were purchased for us by this price: what sins we have committed were satisfied for us by this expiation: and, therefore, we stand acquitted in law." Thus may those, that have a part in this heavenly treasure, make up their accounts with a great deal of confidence; when others, that have nothing to discharge their debts withal, shall be cast into prison, whence they shall never return. Be convinced, therefore of the absolute need and necessity that you stand in of this heavenly treasure.

(3) Another reason why no more labor after this heavenly treasure, is, because there are so few men that are willing to go upon trust.

Truly, the riches of a child of God are in believing, in trusting: and, therefore, we have that expression, James ii. 5; "The poor of this world, rich in faith." Now to be rich in faith only, the world counts a fantastic kind of riches: they would rather be rich in present possessions: they know not the mystery of growing rich, by believing, and having nothing.

Now the people of God go on trust for their treasure: and that two ways.

[1] Their treasures are *invisible.*

2 Cor. iv. 18; "We look not at the things, which are seen: but

at the things, which are not seen." The greatest part of what a Christian doth enjoy lies in invisibles: in the love of God: in interest in him; in communion and fellowship with him; in the actings of faith and dependence upon him. Tell an earthly, carnal man of such a treasure as this, he wonders where lies the glory and excellence of it: he sees not God, nor Christ: he sees not that sweet communion and intercourse, that there is betwixt God and the soul. The things of the world he sees; the pomp, and glory, and splendor of the earth: these are objects of his sense: they are sensible things: and therefore these are things, that do affect him; but he prizes not invisible things, because out of sight, out of mind.

[2] Their treasure is not only invisible, but *future:* it is to come.

It is but little, that a saint enjoys for the present: his great estate lies in hope and in reversion: now he lives, it may be, upon glimpses and half smiles; and very restricted communications of God unto his soul: he hath only enough to make him know what that inheritance is that he expects; and, were it not that his faith tells him sometimes how rich and glorious it is, truly he could not live and subsist upon his present income. Now there is a body of sin and death, that keeps him low and mean in his actual enjoyments: this keeps him in nonage, and bars him from the possession of his estate: yea, but when this old man dies, then there falls to him a large and glorious inheritance, then he is instated into the present possession of all his hopes, and then he can live as much by sight and sense as the men of the world now do. Now this doth not affect earthly men: they have somewhat for the present, and they care not for the future: the world is in their hands, but heaven is afar off: as eternity is that, which shall never end; so it shall never begin with them: and so, foolish creatures! while they are pleasing themselves with empty enjoyments here below, eternity comes upon them unexpected, and they unprovided for it.

And that is a third reason.

(4) Few men are willing to come up to the price of this heavenly treasure.

"Why, what is the price?" you will say. Truly, it is nothing less than all: Mat. xiii. 46, our Saviour, speaking of the wise merchant, says, that "when he had found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it." Now, though hereby is not required actual renouncing of all, but only a disposition of heart to part with all, when they stand either in competition with or opposition to these heavenly things: yet men's affections are so glued to the world and the follies and vanities here below, that they

count this a hard bargain; and they would rather forego God and Christ and the great and glorious things of eternity, than buy them at so dear a rate, as to be willing to part with them all for heavenly things.

You see, then, what hinders men from making heavenly things their treasure. Beware that these things be not charged upon you, as your practical error, at the last day. Let me tell you, it will be sad and dreadful for you, to see poor despicable saints let in to the full possession of this treasure, which here they believed, and hoped, and longed for; and you yourselves, for cleaving to these vain and worldly enjoyments, to be shut out in eternal torments: what horror and dread will this cause within you!

Thus much, for the first branch of this exhortation: labor to get these heavenly things to be your treasure.

2. The other branch is, *never rest satisfied, without a full assurance, that this heavenly treasure is yours; that you have a share in it, and a right to it.*

(1) Consider,

[1] Without this assurance you can never live comfortably.

For, though it be sufficient for your eternal safety and security, that God is your treasure and your exceeding great reward; yet it will not be sufficient for your present comfort, unless you know and apprehend him so to be.

[2] Without this assurance you can never live generously, and as it becomes a Christian.

That is, you cannot live above the world without it: not above the fears and flatteries, above the frowns and fawnings, of the world: unless you have assurance that God is your treasure. A Christian, that knows God is his portion, can do thus: he can rejoice in tribulation, and triumph in afflictions, and live splendidly upon his God, though all the things of this world fail him: Hab. iii. 17, 18; "Although the fig-tree should not blossom, neither fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive should fail....though the flock should be cut off from the fold, and there should be no herd in the stalls:" what then? must not he languish and perish with other men? no: "Yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation." What is the reason there is so much base compliance, and cringing, and servility to every humor of men; but only because men have no assurance of any treasure, but what may be taken from them by men? I need not tell you what times we are now fallen into: they are perilous times, wherein nothing is worth the making sure· nay, indeed, nothing can possibly be made sure.

We see changes and vicissitudes upon every thing; and, therefore, make that sure, that alone can be made sure: and that is God, and heavenly and spiritual things: and, then, "Though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be hurled into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar.....and the mountains shake.....yet God will be our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble:" Ps. xlvi. 1, 2, 3.

(2) To those, that have had this full assurance, I shall only speak two words briefly.

[1] Live upon your treasure: by faith bring in supplies from it, for all your exigencies and necessities.

Yea, live at a far higher rate, than what the men of the world can do: that so they may be convinced, that the poorest Christian hath greater sufficiency in himself than all the world besides; that the world may be convinced, that a Christian hath more in God than the greatest worldling can have in all his worldly possessions.

[2] Take heed of wasting and spending this treasure.

Indeed, the main stock cannot nor shall not be spent: yet take heed of diminishing the heap. Be still adding to it, rather than wasting it. Truly, sin will both waste your treasure, and blot your evidences, and darken that knowledge and assurance that you have that this treasure is yours.

(3) I have but one word more: and that is, to exhort you to lay up your earthly treasures in heaven: you cannot lay them up in a safer place.

But you will say, "How may that be done?"

Why, if you lay them out for the honor and glory of God and in his service, you shall thereby lay them up in heaven: this is the way to carry earth to heaven; yea, to make earthly comforts and enjoyments to tend upon you farther than the grave. We say commonly, "These things will go no farther than the grave with us: there we must part with them:" no, lay up these earthly things in heaven, by employing them for the honor and glory of God, and they shall and will go farther with you than the grave; and, though you brought nothing with you into the world, yet you shall carry them out of the world with you. See Rev. xiv. 13; "Their works do follow them:" they enter into heaven with them. And Luke xvi. 9; "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." "Mammon of unrighteousness:" that is, earthly enjoyments; so called, because usually abused to unrighteousness. "Make you friends of them:" that is, so lay them out for the glory

of God and the good of others, "that, when ye fail," that is, when you die, you may be received into "everlasting habitations," that is, into everlasting glory.

And thus I have finished this subject of laying up treasure in heaven. The Lord make what hath been spoken profitable to your souls!

# PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY,

## RECOMMENDED, URGED, AND ENCOURAGED,

## IN WORKING OUT OUR OWN SALVATION.

*Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God, which worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure.* PHIL. ii. 12, 13.

THE whole sum of Christianity is comprehended in two points; knowledge and obedience. The one is conversant about things supernaturally revealed; and the other, about duties supernaturally performed.

Now, although there be so wide a difference between these two: yet, where they are suffered to run on in a course, they will one fall into the other; and gospel revelations will make way for and lead unto gospel obedience.

Indeed, there is no Divine truth, however abstract, however sublime and speculative it may seem to be, but, by the help of one or two consequences, may be improved to clear and direct our practice. For "*all Scripture* is given by inspiration of God, and *is profitable* for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

And therefore the Apostle, speaking of the whole of Christian religion, calls it "the mystery of godliness:" 1 Tim. iii. 16: and, "the truth which is after godliness:" Titus i. 1. He calls it not a mystery and godliness, or truth and godliness; but he knits and joins them both together, the mystery and truth of godliness: a truth, yea and a truth wrapt up in a mystery, because discovered only by a Divine light; and yet a mystery of godliness, because it is a truth that tends to incline the will and raise the affections, and so direct the conversations of men, unto godliness and obedience.

And thus also, in this chapter, after the Apostle had soared very high in those transcendent mysteries of Christ's Godhead, in the 6th verse; of his incarnation in the 7th verse; of his humiliation, obedience, and passion, in the 8th verse; of his glory, and exaltation above every thing both in heaven and in the earth and in hell, 9th, 10th, and 11th verses: after he had thus soared aloft in these transcendent mysteries, he makes a sudden descent to the exhorta-

tion in the text, "Wherefore.....work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

This illative particle, "wherefore," looks back as far as to the 5th verse: where the Apostle exhorts them, that the same mind should be in them, that was in Christ Jesus: who, though he was essentially equal with God, yet mediatorily became subject unto God: though he was in the form of God, yet he took upon him the form of a servant; laid aside his glory, emptied and humbled himself, and became obedient even to the lowest duties and to the vilest sufferings: he was obedient unto the death; that is, he was obedient to God's law till death, by fulfilling it, and he was obedient unto God's will in death, by suffering it. For which humiliation and obedience, "God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that, at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow." Now, says the Apostle, be you also of the same mind with Christ. Wherefore, as he was obedient, so be you you also: do you "work;" that is, do you obey. As he was humble and emptied himself, be you also humble and lowly: "work.....with fear and trembling; "that is, obey with humility and reverence, as the phrase imports and is often used in Scripture. That so, as Christ obtained glory and exaltation, you also may be exalted and glorified with him: "Work out your own salvation." For these words come in as a parallel with Christ: as he was obedient, so be you: as he was humble and emptied himself, so be you also humble: that so, when he is glorified, you may be saved. "Wherefore....work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

And this I judge to be the Apostle's scope in drawing this conclusion.

In the words, you have three parts.

A duty pressed upon us by a most serious and rational exhortation; "Wherefore....work out your own salvation."

An express way and manner how it is to be performed: and that is "with fear and trembling."

Here is the reason of this exhortation: "For it is God, which worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure."

First. Here is a duty pressed upon us: and that is, *to work out* our *own salvation.*

To explain the words a little:

First. For salvation, you may take it for the whole supernatural state of a Christian; begun here in grace, and to be finished hereafter in glory. And,

Secondly. To work out this salvation, is nothing but to continue and persevere in ways of obedience, until, through them, that salvation, that is begun here on earth, be perfected in heaven.

To work out our salvation, therefore, implies three things:

*First.* Pains and labor. Salvation is that, which must be wrought out: it is that, which will make the soul pant and breathe to obtain it.

*Secondly.* It implies constancy and diligence. A Christian, that would work out salvation, must always be employed about it. It is a web, into which we must weave the whole thread of our lives. That man, that works at salvation only by some passionate fits, and then within a while undoes it all again by foul apostacy and notorious sins, will never work salvation out. No: it must be diligence and constancy that must effect that.

*Thirdly.* It promises success and accomplishment also. And this is a mighty encouragement to enforce the exhortation. Though the work be difficult, our strength little, the enemies many, and the oppositions powerful; yet continue working, your labor shall not be in vain. Though it be hard work, it shall not be long work: for it shall be wrought out; and, what before was your work, shall be your reward; and, what, before was your labor, shall be your wages: and this salvation, that was so painful in working, shall be most blessed in the enjoyment.

SECONDLY. Here is the express way and manner, how this work should be done: and that is, *with fear and trembling.* "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

This fear is not to be taken for a fear of diffidence, perturbation, or despondency: for this is so contrary to the duty of working out salvation, as that it only stupefies and dulls us; and, as in other matters, so in spirituals, it hinders both counsels and performances. But this "fear and trembling," that must qualify our obedience, is nothing else, but an humble self-resignation, self-denial, and a holy awe of God and reverence for Him: with which humility and reverence, the highest degree of spiritual joy and assurance is so far from being inconsistent, that it usually springs from it, and is built upon it. This is meant by "fear and trembling;" and so the phrase is often used in Scripture: so the Psalmist, "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling," Ps. ii. 11: it is not meant of any desponding diffident fear, but only of an awful reverential fear of God, joined with self-abasement: and so St. Paul, to the Corinthians, says of Titus, that he was received "with fear and trembling:" 2 Cor. vii. 15: there was no reason why Titus's coming,

which was so much desired, should cause fear and trembling: only the meaning is, they received him with fear and reverence: and, so, "servants" are commanded to "be obedient to" their "masters:" Eph. vi. 5: so, here, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;" that is, work it out with humility, self-abasement, and reverence.

THIRDLY. Here is the reason of this exhortation: "For it is God, which worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure."

Wherein lies the strength of the reason? Possibly, it might seem, to a carnal judgment, an encouragement to sloth, rather than an encouragement to working and obedience. For, if God work in us both the will and the deed, what need we then be so solicitous about the accomplishment of our salvation; which, not so much we ourselves, as God works out for us? it would rather seem to be a greater motive for us to work, if the Apostle had said, "God will not assist you, and therefore look to yourselves."

Yet there are two ways, without torturing the words, whereby we may make them confess wherein their great strength lies: the one is, by reducing this reason to the duty: and the other is, by referring it to the manner of performing the duty.

First. If we refer it to the duty of working out salvation. then the force and strength of it lies in the consideration of that aid and assistance, that God, by working in us, affords us, to the working out of our own salvation.

"Work! alas!" may some say, "How can we work? Are not the duties of obedience, divine and supernatural? And is it not an Almighty power alone, that can enable us to do what is supernatural? Are we omnipotent? Doth not God herein plainly seek advantages against us, in bidding us thus to work, who have no hands nor strength to work with?"

No, by no means: for, what God commands us to do, he will assist us in the doing of it. And, though obedience be supernatural, and we weak and impotent; yet God is omnipotent. Work, therefore: for this omnipotent God works in you, both to will and to do.

And thus appears the force of the reason, if you apply it to the duty. Now, if you thus refer it, then observe, that all ability in and all encouragement to obedience proceeds from God's working in us what he requireth from us. And thus, as Christ said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work:" so may a weak Christian say, "What I do is above my own strength, indeed; but my God

and my Father worketh hitherto in me; and therefore it is, that I am enabled thus to work."

Secondly. If we refer this reason to the manner of performing obedience, that it must be "with fear and trembling;" as if the exhortation ran thus, Be humble and awful in your obedience, "For it is God, which worketh in you, both to will and to do:" then it carries a double force with it.

*First.* That the due consideration of God's working in us, is the greatest inducement imaginable to a self-abasing humiliation. There is nothing, that will sooner take down pharisaic pride and boasting, than sometimes to be catechising ourselves with those two or three questions and interrogatories of the Apostle: "Who maketh thee to differ?.....what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou boast, as if thou hadst not received it?" 1 Cor. iv. 7. Why dost thou boast and glory, O vain weak man, when all thou hast and all thou dost is from God's free and arbitrary working in thee? alas! there is nothing of all thy graces or duties to be ascribed unto thyself, unless it be the imperfections and weaknesses of them. And this should cause us, when we are most strongly carried out in the ways of God and in the duties of holy obedience, most of all to renounce ourselves and our own sufficiency; and look upon it as an evident argument, that, of ourselves we are able to do nothing, because through God we are enabled to do so much, yea to do all things.

*Secondly.* Since all we do is wrought in us by God, this should cause us to obey with a holy fear and reverence; lest, by our miscarriages, we should provoke God to withdraw from us, on whom depend all the ability and power we have to obey. "It is God, which worketh in you:" and, *therefore*, "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

This shall suffice for the opening and explaining of the words.

I. That, which I shall press upon all, is the duty contained in this exhortation of the Apostle. And the proposition, which I shall lay down from his inspired words, is this:

That IT IS THE DUTY OF EVERY TRUE CHRISTIAN TO WORK OUT HIS OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

Or, thus:

EVERY CHRISTIAN, NAY EVERY MAN, OUGHT TO WORK FOR HIS LIVING, EVEN FOR AN ETERNAL LIFE.

To mention places for the proof of this were to transcribe the Bible: we can nowhere open this blessed book, but we find this truth proved to us, either directly or by consequence; for it is the very genius of the Scripture. And, yet, it is strange in these days to see how dubiously some men, who would be thought admirers of free grace, speak of obedience and working: as if it were the brand of a legal spirit; and as great a stranger to a Christian's warrant, as it is to their practice. Oh, it is a soft and easy doctrine to bid men sit still and believe; as if God would translate men to heaven upon their couches: to tell them, that all that they have now to do, is but to labor for more assurance, to praise God, and to sing hallelujahs unto him. And so also it conduces much to their abundant comfort—does it not?—to tell them, that God sees no sin in them, nor requires any duty from them! that repentance and humiliation are legal things, belonging only to younger persons, and not to the heirs of the promises! Oh, who could think it possible, that such dreams and fantastic delusions could possess so many men's hearts, that ever heard the Scripture speak in its own language; or that ever read what Christ himself, the Holy Ghost, or the blessed Apostles have written, who bid us to "work the works of God," to give all diligence, to abound in all the fruits of righteousness? Is it possible, that these notions should be dispersed by some, and entertained by others, but because it always hath been the policy of the devil, wherein he hath sped so well, still to vent those doctrines that indulge the flesh, under the name and patronage of free grace and gospel attainments? But, of this, more hereafter.

Let us now consider the REASONS of this truth.

And,

i. Wherefore is it, that we are commanded, to *strive* that we may enter in at the strait gate? Luke xiii. 24; so to *run*, that we may obtain? 1 Cor. ix. 24; so to *wrestle*, that we may be able to stand? Eph. vi. 11, 12; so to *fight*, that we may lay hold on eternal life? 1 Tim. vi. 12; not to *faint* in our minds? Heb. xii. 3; nor to *grow weary* in well-doing? Gal. vi. 9.

Do not all these expressions imply great labor and pains? Can you strive, and run, and wrestle, and fight, and all this by doing nothing? or, were it needful to be taught not to grow faint, nor to be weary, when we have no work to do? Therefore, it is the genius and sum of the Scripture, to excite men to be always active and laborious in the ways of holiness and obedience.

ii. Wherefore is it, that salvation is set forth to us under the notion of a REWARD? Is it not to imply that we must work for it?

A reward, not indeed merited by our works; but yet a reward measured out to us and conferred upon us, according to our works. God "will render to every man according to his works: to them, who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory....and immortality," he will render "eternal life:" Rom. ii. 6, 7. And, indeed, it were very strange, if that God, who will reward us with eternal life, according to our works, should yet lay a check upon the ingenuousness of the new creature, thereby to account eternal life too low a motive to excite unto eternal life.

iii. Is it not to this end, that God hath implanted such an ACTIVE PRINCIPLE OF GRACE in the hearts of his servants, that thereby they might be enabled to work out their own salvation?

If God would save you without working, why then hath he given you such an operative principle that you might work? Nay, I might affirm that he might as well save you without grace, as without works; for that is not grace, that doth not put forth itself in working: grace, if it be true, will be working: it will rise in the thoughts: it will work in the affections: it will breathe in desires, appear in good works, and be very active and busy in the whole life and conversation. Now, not to work, is that, which puts a check and restraint upon this active principle: it is to curb it in, when it would freely break forth into action, upon every occasion given to it.

iv. Why hath God so often promised us ASSISTANCE, if it be not that thereby we should be encouraged to work?

He stands by us, to confirm our hearts, to strengthen our hands, to help our weakness, to quicken our deadness, to recruit our graces by continual supplies; and wherefore is all this, but that we might work? God, rather than we shall not work, himself will set us at work: nay, he will maintain us, at our work and in our work, upon his own cost. He gives us aid and promises assistance only for this end, that we might work out our own salvation. We are not sufficient of ourselves, says the Apostle, "of ourselves to think any thing:" 2 Cor. iii. 5. What, then, must we therefore sit still, because we are not sufficient? no, says he, for God, who finds us employment, will also find us strength: "our sufficiency is of God." And therefore it is, that God gives in assistances and supplies, that we might work the works of God.

And thus I have confirmed the doctrine, *why* we ought to work, and *that* we ought to work.

II. But, here, before I can proceed any farther, there are some OBJECTIONS that must be answered, THAT SEEM TO OPPOSE THE TRUTH OF THIS DOCTRINE.

Obj. 1. Some may cavil against this command of working out our salvation, as a thing impossible.

Obj. 2. Others, as derogatory unto Christ and his merits.

Obj. 3. Others, as prejudicial to the free grace of God, by which alone we are saved, and not by our own works.

Obj. 4. Others look upon it as vain and needless; since God will certainly bring to salvation all those whom he hath elected and foreknown, according to his purpose: which purpose of his, neither their not working with it, no nor their working against it, shall ever make void or frustrate.

OBJECT. i. Say some, "With what justice and equity can God require this duty of working out our salvation, when he knows we have no power to perform it? Either," say they, "it concerns those, that are spiritually inclined and have their salvation already begun, that they perfect it by working it out: and, if so, alas! to what purpose is it, when they themselves can act no further than they are acted? they cannot so much as will their own salvation, unless God give them to will; much less then can they work out their salvation. Or, else, it concerns all, that live under the sound of the Gospel, though reprobates and castaways, though dead in trespasses and sins. And is it rational, is it just and equal, to bid dead men work? Or doth it become that God, who would be thought by us to be infinitely merciful and compassionate, to mock and deride human miseries, in requiring of them things that are impossible? Had he commanded us to bring light out of darkness: had he bid us pull the stars out of their orbs; or, with one of our hands, to stop the sun in its course: all these impossibilities we might as well do, as perform these divine duties, without divine assistance. We can as soon glorify ourselves, as sanctify ourselves. Exhort and command never so long, with as great authority and vehemency as you please; yet, till God move on us and work in us, you may as well expect stocks and stones should move at your speaking as we. And, if God doth but once begin to move and work in us, we shall work and move without your exhortations. It

It is therefore," say such as these, "altogether in vain to press men to duty, till God works in them: for all your exhortations are not sufficient, till he works; and, when he works, all your exhortations will be fruitless."

Because this is the common plea of sinners, why they do not work; and that, which unquestionably doth too often rise in the hearts and thoughts of most men, whereby they are greatly discouraged, and their hands weakened in their obedience; I shall, therefore, the more largely and particularly answer this objection.

And,

Ans. 1. This serious and pressing exhortation to obedience and working, *doth not suppose in us, nor is it necessary that it should suppose in us, a power to obey;* I mean a present and actual power: *neither doth our want of power take off our obligation to obey.*

It may and will be granted, that there is no command of God, but doth suppose a power once bestowed. Whether or no his absolute incontrollable sovereignty might have required that from us, that is above our power ever to perform, may rather modestly be doubted, than peremptorily concluded. Yet this is certain, that those very duties, that now we complain we have no strength or power to perform, were once as subject to our power and the freedom of our own wills, as now natural and moral actions are: subject, I say, to our power, either to perform them or not to perform them: not as though we come now into the world with this power, for we are all dead and still-born in respect of grace; but as having this power in our first parent, who was our representative: for in him we must be considered as existent, even when he existed; and, what he received was for us, and what he did was done by us, and what he lost we lost in him. Now if we have lost this power of obeying, must God also lose his privilege and sovereignty of commanding? must he lessen his authority, as we lessen our ability? Truly, had Adam once thought of this flight, he might have sinned himself quite from under the command and dominion of his Creator, and might soon have become thus free. Do not you yourselves think you may, if a debtor of yours through his own default becomes a bankrupt, require your debt of him? So stands the case here between God and us: we are all disabled to pay the debt of obedience that we owe to God, but yet it is through our own default; and the power, that we had, is not so much lost, as willfully thrown away: and may not God justly come upon us for our debt? Our want of power takes not off our obligation to

obedience, because it is through a willful defect that we are deprived of that power: if a servant throw away his tools with which he should work, may not his master justly expect his work from him, though he knows he cannot work without them? God's commands respect not the impotence that we have contracted, nor do they therefore abate any thing of their severity; but they respect that power and ability, that was once conferred and bestowed upon us.

Yea, were it so that God could with justice require no more from us than what at present we have power and ability to perform, this would make the grace of God, first, vain and fruitless, and, secondly, dangerous and destructive.

(1) This would make void the pardoning grace of God.

For, according to this doctrine, nothing could be required of us, if we could do nothing: but, without grace, we can do nothing; and, therefore, if grace be not bestowed on us, nothing can justly be required from us; and, if nothing be required, nothing is due from us; and, then, we do not sin in not performing any thing; and, where there is no sin, certainly there can be no place for pardoning grace and mercy. And so these wise men, who think they do so much befriend the grace and mercy of God in all haste, in affirming that God requires nothing from us but what at present we have power to perform, are injurious to the mercy of God, in making it void as to pardon and remission.

(2) This doctrine makes the sanctifying grace of God destructive and pernicious.

If God can require justly no more of us than we can perform, wherefore is it, that men are justly damned? is it not, because they will not do what they are able to do? And whence is it, that they have this ability? is it not from the grace of God's Spirit? And, therefore, if they have not grace to make them able to do more than their own corrupt wills are willing to do, God could not justly condemn them; and, consequently, that of the Apostle should stand no longer true, "Through grace ye are saved," (Eph. ii. 5,) but through grace ye perish.

These two consequences will follow, if God could justly require no more from us, than what we have the power now to do. So that, though we have not the power and ability to work out our own salvation, yet we are not thereby excused from our obligation to do it.

But,

Ans. 2. Though we cannot, of ourselves, work out our own salvation, *Yet God doth not mock us, as some do thence infer; neither*

*doth he only upbraid us with our own weakness: but hath serious and weighty ends why he commands us to obey.*

Those, that are so ready to cast this odium upon the doctrine of special grace; making God a derider of human frailty and miseries, when he commands obedience from them, to whom, say they, himself denies that power and grace that should enable them to obey; I would only ask these persons this question: Whether do they grant, or whether or no they can deny, that God, antecedently, before he commands, knows who will obey and who will not obey? If they say God knows who will not obey, will they say God mocks them when he commands them to obey, though he knows they will not? What they answer to this, the same may we answer to their objection.

But, there are two ends, why God commands us thus to work, though we are not able; according to which, God is very serious in commanding us thus to work.

And God doth this,

(1) That he may thereby convince us of our own weakness, and that wretched estate into which our sins have brought us; that he may humble and abase us, when we reflect how far we are fallen from our first perfection and excellence.

When we consider, on the one hand, that God requires nothing from us now, but what we once had a power to perform: and then, on the other hand, how little, yea how much of that nothing, it is that now we have power to perform; this convinces us how miserably great our fall is, that makes those things impossible to us, that once were both easy and delightful.

(2) God loves to deal with men as with rational creatures, that have free faculties; are capable of moral influences; and are fit subjects to be wrought upon by precepts, counsels, commands, and exhortations, as well as by internal and efficacious grace: that arguments and motives may persuade without, as grace sways within; that so, by both, he might render them a willing people in the day of his power.

And, therefore, they are not in vain, neither to those that shall be saved, nor to those that perish.

[1] To those, that shall be saved, these are the instruments, of which the Spirit of God makes use to incline their wills, and conquer their affections unto the obedience of Christ: and, therefore, they are not in vain.

In conversion, ordinarily, if not always, the moral work goes before the physical: that is, there is, first the rational persuasion,

before there is the efficacious and determining motion. For God, when he works on man, accommodates himself to the nature of man: that, as he is a creature, so he may be and is the subject of God's efficacious motions; and, as he is rational, so he may be guided by counsels, led by persuasions, and overawed by convictions. And, therefore, when God converts any, he takes both these ways: inwardly, he works by effectual grace, powerfully subduing the will as a creature subject unto it; and, outwardly, he works by moral suasions and authoritative commands, whereby he inclines the will sweetly and freely to consent to the power of that inward grace, which indeed he shall never, nay indeed he cannot resist: and both these together do concur, as I said before, to make a willing people in the day of God's power.

And,

[2] For those, that perish, these commands have a double end and use.

1st. They are instruments in the hand of the common work of the Spirit of God, to raise them up to all those moral good things, that they attain to, short of true and saving grace.

It is wonderful, truly, to see how the raging wickedness of the world is dared by a command charged with a threatening. Herod heard John Baptist, who doubtless laid the law home to him, so that "he did many things:" Abimelech and Laban were warned in a dream, whereby God overruled and prevented that wickedness, that was intended by them: were they compelled to what they did? No; God loves to rule the world in a rational way; so that, though he acts and moves wicked men to that good that they do, yet he doth it by moral considerations, and such inducements as do most comport with and suit the liberty of their own will. Promises encourage: threatenings deter: counsels direct: commands enforce: and all these concur, instrumentally, to awe the consciences, and to incline the wills even of wicked men themselves. Whose conscience can gainsay this? Let the vilest sinner freely speak: when he hath been most mad and vile upon his lusts, hath not oftentimes some command or threatening suddenly shot itself in betwixt his conscience and sin? Have not two or three weak words silently whispered to him, whence or from whom he knows not, stopped his way and given a check to his lust, when it was swelling ready to break forth into act? And whence have they this power? It is not from themselves: for why then doth it not always so work? But it is from God's inward and physical, though but common work; that, when the affections are most

furious and corruption most raging, will effectually persuade to restrain and assuage.

2dly. Another end is, that hereby God leaves them without excuse.

If they perish, they shall have nothing to pretend against God. Hath he not often warned, and counselled, and threatened them? Hath he not told them, with as much earnestness and vehemence as the words of his ministers could deliver it, that "the wages of sin is death," and the end of those ways wherein they walk will be shame and eternal destruction? Have they not, with all seriousness and entreaties, been called upon, again and again, to repent and turn from the unfruitful works of darkness, and to work the works of God? Can the mouth of God or man speak plainer, when they have been calling and crying after any, "Turn ye, turn ye: why will ye die?" This is that, which, from our souls, we do beseech and entreat at the hands of sinners, even for the blood and bowels of Jesus Christ; nay, for the blood and bowels of their own precious souls, which they are willfully spilling upon the ground, that they would "turn and live." Now there is not one, that hears this serious injunction and is not obedient to it, but his blood, even the blood of his soul, will lie upon him forever. What is it, that men expect? Must God drive men to heaven by force and violence, whether they will or no? He hath laid promises and threatenings before them: he exhorts and commands: and, if these things will not prevail with men whose faculties are entire, whose reason is sound, and whose wills are free; think not foolishly to charge God, for he is free from the blood of all men, and sinners will be found to be self-murderers and self-destroyers. "If I had not come and spoken unto them," says our Saviour, "they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin:" so, if God had not come and spoken unto sinners, they had neither had sin nor condemnation; but, now that he hath spoken to them so often, and exhorted them so frequently and earnestly, therefore "now they have no cloak for their sin." God hath spoken, and his speaking will strike every impenitent wretch dumb and silent at the great day, whatever they pretend to now.

And this is a second particular, in answer to this objection: God doth not mock men's weakness, when he commands them to work; but hath great, wise, and weighty ends why he doth it.

Ans. 3. To come somewhat nearer: *there is, indeed, no such impotence and weakness in man; but, if he will, he may work out his own salvation.*

I speak not this to assert the power of man to work out salvation, without the aid of special grace, to incline the will; but, if the will be once inclined and made willing, there is nothing more required to make a man able: I say, where there is special grace given to make the will willing to convert, to believe, and to repent, there is nothing more required to make a man able; because conversion, faith, and repentance chiefly consist in the act of the will itself: now if the will wills repentance, it doth repent; if it wills faith, it doth believe; and so of the rest: and, therefore, there is nothing more required to make a man able, than what he hath in a state of unregeneracy; only, to make him willing is required special grace, which they that favor the undue liberty of the will do deny. And, therefore, God expostulates with the stubbornness of the will: Why will ye perish? "Why will ye die?" Ezek. xviii. 31; xxxiii. 11; and Christ accuseth the will: "Ye will not come to me, that ye may have life:" John v. 40. It is true, there is an impotence in the will; but this is only its stubbornness and obstinacy: it will not hearken to God's call: it will not obey his commands: it will not strive against sin nor perform duties: and, therefore, it cannot. Our CANNOT is not, indeed, an impotence, that we lie under; so much as the stubbornness of our wills. There is not the greatest sinner, who hath wrought iniquity with both hands greedily, but may work out his own salvation if he will: if he be but once willing, he hath that already, that may make him able: God puts no new powers into the soul, when he converts it. It is true, the will cannot incline itself to obedience, without grace; but, yet, it can intend it, if it will: it is its stubbornness, that makes it impotent. It is in the things of grace, as in other free actions of a man's life, with a proportionable abatement: a man can speak and walk, if he will; but, if he be resolutely set not to do these things, he cannot do them so long as that resolution remains, though simply and absolutely he can do them: doth this argue any impotence? So is it here: you may obey and work, if you will; but, if you are resolutely bent against these, if you are resolved not to do them, while that resolution continues you cannot do them: but this argues not any natural impotence, but a moral impotence only: this is an impotence of stubbornness and perverseness. Never, therefore, plead the inability of your will: no; it is through your own stubborn resolution if you perish: you are resolved for hell and destruction; and, if you are plunged into them, it is through your own willfulness, and not through weakness.

Ans. 4. To come yet a little nearer to conscience and practice:

*these very men, that thus make their impotence a pretence for their sloth, do not indeed believe what they pretend and assert here.*

They do not believe, that they are thus impotent: no; it is in the inward and secret thoughts of them all, that they have a power to work out their own salvation; and, therefore, whether they have or have not power, yet still they are inexcusable, if, while they think they have power, yet they will not strive and endeavor to put it forth. Those men, who thus plead impotence and want of power to obey and work out their salvation, though they speak these things, yet they believe not a word of what they say; and therefore they are inexcusable, if they strive not to put forth that power, that they suppose they have, into act. Although a man's feet be chained and fettered that he cannot walk nor stir, yet if he thinks himself at liberty, and yet will sit still, judge you whether the fault be not wholly to be imputed to his want of will, and not to his want of power; for he thinks himself free and able to move, but will not try. So is it here: wicked men do think they have power to work, however they speak otherwise sometimes; and, therefore, they are utterly inexcusable if they do not work: this is as clear as the light; and their slothfulness, therefore, proceeds not from their weakness, but from their willfulness.

And I shall endeavor, by some arguments, to convince sinners, that they do indeed think and believe that they have this power to work out their own salvation, whatever they may pretend to; and that therefore they are inexcusable, if they do not strive and endeavor to do it. And,

(1) Did you never, when God hath shaken his rod over you, promise and resolve to work?

By his rod, I mean either some convictions or afflictions: have not these made you to enter into engagements with God, that you would obey him, and walk more holily and strictly for the future? And did you not really thus resolve to do? Few, I believe, there are, but have, some time or other, under some fit of sickness or some pang of conscience, thus done. And what! did you resolve all this; and yet, at the same time, think and believe you could do nothing at all? Did you only mock God? Did you only dally and play with your own consciences? No, certainly: conscience was too much provoked, too much enraged, and too broad awake, to be so jested withal. We find this very temper in the Israelites, when they were affrighted with the terrible voice of God from Mount Sinai: see how confidently, under that conviction, they

promise and resolve: "Speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee; and we will.....do it." Deut. v. 27; and so the Jews also, when they were in great distress and calamity, when the whip and the rod were over them, then they took up large resolutions, and made great promises what they would be and do: "Whether it be good, or whether it be evil," say they, "we will obey the voice of the Lord our God." Jer. xlii. 6. And, O, unto how many pious purposes and holy resolutions have the dangers, fears, and sick-beds of many men been witnesses! Have they not heard sinners cry out, "Lord, spare a little: give us some space: try us once more, Lord; and we will reform our sinful lives, and perform neglected duties: never more will we return to folly." And are not these resolutions and promises evident convictions, that you thought you had power to do what you thus resolved to do? Who is there, but hath, some time or other, under some trouble and affliction, taken up such resolutions of obedience as these? And, certainly, you dare not so much mock God, and dally with your own consciences under such convictions, as to make such promises, but that you think you can perform what you promise.

(2) Did you never, in your whole lives perform a duty to God? Did you never pray to him? Is there any one so desperately profane, so utterly lost as to any show and appearances of goodness, as not to have prayed or performed one duty unto God in his whole life? To what end have you prayed and performed these duties, that you have done? Was it not for salvation? And did you work for salvation, and at the same time believe you could not work? No: it is impossible, that ever any man's practice should maintain such a contradiction. Whatever men's opinions are, yet their works show that they think they have power: for, something must be done, though it be but formally; though but a slight, cold, heartless, "Lord, have mercy on me!" or a customary, "Lord, forgive me:" yet something conscience requires; and this men reckon and account the working out of salvation.

(3) Wherefore is it, that you trust to and rely upon your works, if indeed you think you have no power to work out your own salvation by them?

Would it be so hard and difficult to take men off from leaning too much upon their works, if they did not believe they had a power to work out their own salvation by them? Men do apprehend some worth, some value and sufficiency, in what themselves

do in order to eternity. For, bid them forego and renounce their own works, their own righteousness, this is a hard saying; and they can as easily renounce and forego all hopes of happiness and salvation, as renounce their own works. Now, whence is it, that men are with such difficulty brought to renounce their own works? It is because, by them, they hope to obtain salvation. And can there be such a principle in men, and they yet at the same time believe and think that they cannot work out their own salvation? It is very evident, therefore, whatever notions men may take up, to stop the mouth of a clamorous conscience when it calls them to working and laboring, that yet they do not themselves believe what they say concerning their impotence, but do really think they have a power to work out their own salvation.

(4) When the Spirit of God hath been dealing with your hearts and consciences, when it hath been persuading you to enter upon a course of obedience, did you never procrastinate and use delays?

Did you never stifle the breathings and resist the motions of the Holy Spirit, thinking it time enough to do that upon which they put you hereafter? "Why need I begin so soon to vex flesh and blood? What? deny the pleasures of my life, so soon as I come to relish and taste them? When sickness and gray hairs admonish me, and tell me I am near eternity; when old age promiseth me, that the severity and strictness of religion shall not last long to trouble me; then, will I repent and believe, and work out my own salvation." Speak truly, and deal plainly with your own consciences: have not these been the foolish reasonings of your own hearts? have you not often thus promised God and your own consciences? and doth not all this imply, that you thought you had a power to do it? why did you delay and put it off, if you thought you had no power to do it at last? Wherefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whoever thou art that wilt not work: it is in vain to plead thou wantest power: God will confute thee by thyself, and out of thy own mouth. What! wilt thou say, thou hadst no power? why thou thoughtest that thou hadst power, and yet wouldst not work, nor endeavor so to do; and therefore thy ruin, if thou perishest, is as willful, and thy condemnation will be as just, as if thou hadst power and wouldest not work.

And this is the fourth answer to this objection: men do really believe that they have power to work, and therefore they are inexcusable if they will not endeavor to put it forth.

Ans. 5. *Men will not plead so foolishly; no, not in matters of far lower concernment, than the salvation of their souls is.*

Would a master, when he commands his servant to work, take this as a sufficient excuse for his sloth and idleness, that he hath no power to work, till God acts and moves him? Why this is a truth, that he cannot do it unless God enable him; and, it may as well be objected by your servants to you, and with more reason too, than by you unto God. Pray tell me, what power have I to speak one word, or you to hear one word more, unless God concurs to it? nay, we are not sufficient to think as of ourselves: yet we do not make this an excuse to forbear those actions, that are necessary. Do we therefore resolve to do nothing, because it is impossible for us to do any thing unless God concur? What stupid and dull folly is this! No: but we put it plainly and hourly to the trial: and never could any one produce that man, that could ever say, God was wanting to him in his concurrence, when he would have done an action. What a miserably ridiculous task would it be, if, in every action of our lives wherein we can do nothing without God, we should still be questioning God's concurrence with us! When you sit, do you dispute whether God will enable you to arise? when you walk, do you, every step you take, question whether God will concur to another step? no men put these things to the trial: and, though it be impossible that they should live, move, or stir, till God act and move them; yet this hinders not men's endeavors, no, nor is it any matter of discouragement to them. Now why should we not do so in spirituals, as well as in temporals? are they not of greater concernment? do they not more deserve the trial? It is true, we can do nothing without God's concurrence; yet, let us put it to the trial, whether or no God will not concur when we endeavor. Certainly, that man must be forever nameless that can say, he was truly willing and did sincerely endeavor to do any good thing, and God did not enable him.

Ans. 6. *Although wicked men had power to work out their salvation, yet they would never do it:* and therefore it is a vain and most unreasonable pretence for sloth, to plead want of power: for, had wicked men power, they would never obey.

"But how can any one tell that? What! not obey, if we had power!" No: and the reason is this: because there is no wicked man in the world, that hath done so much, or that doth so much, as he is able to do; no, not so much as he is able to do without special grace and assistance: and, therefore, it is not inability, but willful sloth, that destroys men. Sinners, ask your own consciences these questions: Was there not one duty more that you could have performed? Was there not one temptation, nor one corruption more,

that you could have resisted? Could you not have prayed, and read, and heard, and meditated more upon heavenly things; even then, when your hearts and thoughts have been vain and worldly, yea sinful and devilish? Might not that time have been spent in holy converse, that you have trifled away in idleness and in doing nothing, or that which is worse than nothing? What force, or restraint, is laid upon you? Is there any violence used to you? Can you not think? And, if you can, can you not think of God; as well as of the things of the world, or upon your lusts? Can you not speak? And, if you can, can you not speak of God, of heaven, and the concernments of another life; as well as of your trade, and bargainings, and other trivial matters, which are below a man, much more below a Christian? What force is there put upon sinners? Doth the devil force open the drunkard's mouth; and pour down his intemperate cups, whether he will or no? Doth the devil violently move the black tongue of the blasphemer and swearer, to rend and tear the holy name of God, by horrid oaths and blasphemies? Doth the devil strike men dumb, when they should pray; or deaf, when they should hear; or senseless, when they should understand and ponder? Is there any such force or violence used unto any? Can you not avoid the one, and can you not do the other, if you will? You can: but, you will not; and therefore neither would you work out your own salvation, if you could do it. Is there any hope, that you would ever willingly do the greater, who will not do the less? Let your impotence and weakness be what it will, your damnation lies not upon it, but upon your willfulness, so long as your willfulness is greater than your weakness. No, it is not owing to your impotence, that your precious and immortal souls perish eternally; but it is only for lack of a will, to pity them, and to save them. Sinners! wherefore then will you perish? Why will you sleep away your souls into hell? Will you go on drowsily to destruction? Shall your souls be ready to burn as a brand in unquenchable fire, and will you not stretch forth your hand to snatch it out? Is it more painful for you to work, than to be damned? Endeavor, therefore, to do what you can: labor and sweat at salvation, rather than fail of it: let it not grate and fret your consciences in hell, that you lie there for a willful neglect.

"But, should I labor, should I endeavor, should I work to my utmost, should I do all that I am able to do, I cannot work grace in myself by all this: to what purpose, then, should I work?"

However, try God in this particular. Did you ever know any, who thus labored and thus wrought, that did not give very good

evidence of a work of grace wrought upon their hearts? And why then should you suspect that you should be the first? What reason have you to think, that God should make you the first example of a soul, that did endeavor, strive, and work for salvation, and yet came short of it; when you never either heard or read of any, that put forth themselves to the utmost for the obtaining of grace, and yet fell short of grace or glory?

Thus, in these six particulars put together, you have a full and an abundant answer and satisfaction to this objection, concerning our impotence to work out our own salvation.

OBJECT. ii. Another objection against this doctrine is this: "Thus to press men to obedience and working, is prejudicial and derogatory unto Christ's merits; by which alone we are saved, and not by our own works. Hath not Christ already done all for us? Hath he not finished and wrought out our salvation himself? And is not this, to render his work as insufficient, to go and piece it out by our obedience? Is not this, to set up our works as Antichrist, in flat opposition and defiance to the gracious undertaking and perfect accomplishment of Jesus Christ; when all, that we have now to do, is to believe in him, and to get a right and title to him and saving interest in him?"

To this I answer: The merit of Jesus Christ, and our working, are not inconsistent; but there is a sweet harmony and agreement betwixt them, in carrying on the work of our salvation.

And, to make this evident, I shall lay down the due bounds and limits of each of them; that so it may appear, what Christ hath done for us, and what he expects we should do for ourselves.

Christ, therefore, hath done two things, in order to carry on our salvation.

He hath purchased and procured eternal happiness, to be conferred upon us hereafter.

He hath merited grace, to be conferred upon us here to prepare us for that happiness.

1. *He hath purchased happiness and eternal life, for all that do believe in him.* "I give unto them eternal life," says he himself. John x. 28. And, says the Apostle, He is "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him?" Heb. v. 9.

Now, as there are two things, that must be done for us, before we can be brought unto a state of salvation; namely to free us from

our liability to death, and to bestow upon us a right to life eternal: so, Jesus Christ, that he might bring us into this state, hath performed both these things for us.

(1) He hath satisfied divine justice for us; snatching us from under the vengeance of God; substituting himself in our room and stead; bearing the load of all that wrath and punishment, that must otherwise have fallen insupportably heavy upon us. "His soul," says the Prophet, was made "an offering for sin:" Isa. liii. 10. And he was made "sin for us," says the Apostle, that is, he was punished as a sinner for us, "who knew no sin:" 2 Cor. v. 21. And,

(2) He hath perfectly fulfilled the commands of the law, by his active obedience; so that the life, promised by God in the law to the doers of it, doth now undoubtedly belong to all those, for whom Christ did obey the law; that is, for all those, that believe in him.

And, by both these, bearing the penalty of the law and fulfilling the duties of the law, God is atoned, justice is satisfied, vengeance is pacified; and we are reconciled, adopted, and made heirs of glory according to the promise.

"But, what! shall glory and happiness be presenttly bestowed upon us? Shall we be installed into it, without any more circumstance? Must nothing intervene betwixt Christ's purchase and our actual possession?"

There must: for,

2. *Christ hath purchased grace, to be bestowed upon them, upon whom he bestows salvation.* "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men:" Eph. iv. 8; and, among others, especially the gifts of grace. For, "of his fullness," says the Apostle, "have we all received, and grace for grace:" John i. 16.

And why did Christ make this purchase? why did he merit grace for us? was it not, that we might act it in obedience? And, if Christ merited grace that we might obey, is it sense to object that our obedience is derogatory to Christ's merit? If one end of Christ's doing all that he did for us, was to enable us to do for ourselves, will any man say, "Now I am bound to do nothing, because Christ hath done all?" How lost are such men, both to reason and religion, who undertake so to argue! No: salvation was purchased and grace was procured, that, by the acting and exercise of that grace, we might attain to that salvation; and both these are to be preserved entirely as things most sacred, ascribing them solely to the merits of our Saviour. So far are we from exhorting men to work out their salvation by way of merit and purchase, as that we conclude them guilty of the highest sacrilege and practical blasphemy

against the priestly office of Jesus Christ, who think by their own works to merit the one or the other.

And, therefore, though Jesus Christ hath done thus much for us; yet, that he might leave us also some work to do, I shall now show what he expects from us in order to the working out of our own salvation.

And, as he hath done two things for us, so he requires two things from us. As,

He requires, that we should put forth all the strength and power of nature, in laboring after grace. And,

He requires that we should put forth the power of grace, in laboring for salvation, purchased for us.

(1) He requires, that all those, who are void of grace, should labor for it with that power and strength that they have.

And, in so doing, they do not at all intrench upon the work of Christ; neither is it at all derogatory to his merits. See how the Prophet expresseth this, Ezek. xviii. 31; "Make you a new heart and a new spirit:" he speaks to those, that were in a state of nature; and he bids them make a new heart and a new spirit; "for why will ye die?" noting, that, if they did not labor after a new heart and a new spirit, they would certainly die the death. Let every sinner know, that this is it, that he is required to do: this is that, which God expects from him: it is his work, to repent and return that he may live: it is his work, to labor to change his own heart, and to renew his own spirit. It is true, it is God's work also; for he hath promised to give a new heart and a new spirit: Ezek. xi. 19; and it is Christ's work also, as he is God; but yet it is not Christ's work, as a Mediator: and, therefore, to endeavor the working of a new heart in us, is not at all to intrench upon the mediatorial office of Jesus Christ; for, so, his office is not to work grace, but to procure it; not to implant grace, but to purchase it. You cannot, therefore, sit down and say, "What need is there of my working? Christ hath already done all my work for me, to my hands." No: Christ hath done his own work: he hath done the work of a Saviour and a surety; but he never did the work of a sinner. If Christ, by meriting grace, had bestowed it upon thee and wrought it in thee, then indeed there was no more required of thee to become holy, but to cast back a lazy look to the purchase of Jesus Christ: then, thy sloth would have had some pretence why thou dost not labor. But this will not do: our Saviour commands all men to "seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness:" Mat. vi. 33; and the Apostle exhorts Simon

Magus himself, though "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity," yet "pray," says he, "if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee:" Acts viii. 22; do not, therefore, cheat your own souls into perdition, by lazy notions of Christ's merits. What though Christ hath merited, yet God requires that you should work and labor, to change your own hearts, and reform your own lives; but, if you sit still, expecting till the meriting grace of Christ drop down into your souls, of its own accord, and change your hearts; truly, it may be, before that time you yourselves may drop down into hell with your old unchanged hearts.

And this is the first thing, which Christ requires.

(2) Christ expects and requires, that those, that have grace should put forth the utmost strength and power thereof, in laboring after that salvation that he hath purchased for them.

He hath merited salvation for them, but it is to be obtained by them through their own labor and industry. Is not that, which Christ hath already done, sufficient for them? Is it not enough, that he hath reconciled them to God by the blood of the covenant? that he hath made their peace and procured their pardon for them? but must Christ repent, and believe, and obey for them? This is not to make him a Saviour, but a drudge. He hath done what was meet and fit for a Mediator to do: he now requires of us what is meet for sinners to do: namely, to believe, to repent, to be converted, and to obey: he now bids you wash and be clean. And what would you have more? would you have the Great Prophet come and strike off your leprosy, and you only mark the cure, and do nothing thereunto? Or, is it indeed enough, that salvation and happiness are purchased, that the way to heaven is made passable, that the bolts and bars of the New Jerusalem by Christ are broken off? Alas! what of all this! thou mayest still be as far from heaven and glory as ever, if thou dost not walk in the way that leads to it: still thou art as far from entering into heaven as ever, if thou dost not strive at the entrance into the strait gate. It is, therefore, in vain that Christ died, it is in vain that thou art justified, it is in vain that thou art adopted, it is in vain that heaven is prepared for thee: Christ may keep heaven, and glory, and his crowns, and robes forever to himself; unless, as he hath purchased these great things for his people, so also he hath purchased to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works: a people, "who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and.....immortality," and by that way obtain it. Thus we see that Christ's doing all for us, is no excuse for our doing nothing: he hath, indeed,

done all for us that belongs to him, as a Mediator meriting and procuring grace and salvation; but he never intended to do all for us, as to the conveying of them to us and making them ours: no; that is still to be done by us: and, therefore, though Christ's works alone were meritorious, yet by the actings of faith we must apply his merit, and by the actings of obedience confirm them to ourselves. I might add also, when Christ is said to obey the law in our stead, as well as to suffer in our stead: though his bearing the punishment of the law by death doth excuse and exempt us from suffering; yet his obeying the law doth not excuse our obedience unto the law: Christ obeyed the law, in a far different respect to the obedience which is now required from us: he obeyed as a covenant of works; we, only as a rule of righteousness: if he had failed in the least tittle, he could not have purchased life that was promised; but we, though we fall infinitely short in our obedience, may yet inherit that life that Christ hath purchased: Christ's obedience was fully perfect, yet ours is not derogatory thereunto, because it proceeds from other grounds than Christ's did.

But I will not proceed in this further than to conclude this answer with two practical things in reference to this question.

First. So work with earnestness, constancy, and unweariedness in well doing, as if thy works alone were able to justify and save thee.

Look, with what affection and fervency you would pray, if now God with a voice from heaven should tell you, that, for the next prayer you make, you should be either saved or damned: look, with what reverence and attention you would hear, with what spirituality of heart you would meditate, if your eternal state and condition were to be determined and fixed by the next of those duties that in this kind you were to perform: with the same fervency, affection, and spirituality perform all the obedience that you do. Why should you not do so? Are not God's commands as peremptory and as authoritative for obedience under the covenant of grace, as they were under the covenant of works? Is not obedience of as absolute necessity now as ever, though not to the same end and purpose? and, since the end of our obedience is graciously changed, doth not this change lay a farther obligation of gratitude upon us to obey God, who requires it from us, not as merit, but as duty? Still, there is as great an obligation to obey now under the condition of the covenant of grace, as ever there was while mankind stood under the tenor of the covenant of works. Certainly, Christ's merit was never given to slacken our obedience: and it is

the most unworthy, nay it is the most accursed use, that any Christian can make of it, that therefrom he should take encouragement to grow more remiss and slack in obedience. Would you not thereby turn the grace of God into wantonness? Would you not abuse the infinite mercy of a Mediator? Think with yourselves: "How would I strive and struggle, were I to stand or fall upon the account of my own works and duties!" Use the same diligence, put forth the same endeavors, as indeed in that case you would do. And,

Secondly. So absolutely depend and rely upon the alone merits of Jesus Christ for your justification and salvation, as if you never had performed an act of obedience in all your life.

This is the right gospel-frame of obedience: so to work, as if you were only to be saved by your own merits; and, withal, so to rest on the merits of Christ, as if you had never wrought any thing. It is a difficult thing, to give to each of these its due, in our practice; when we work, we are too apt to neglect Christ; and, when we rely on Christ, we are too apt to neglect working. But, that Christian hath got the right skill and art of obedience, that can mingle these two together: that can, with one hand, work the works of God; and yet, at the same time, with the other hand, lay fast hold on the merits of Jesus Christ. Let this antinomian principle be forever rooted out of the minds of men, that our working is derogatory to Christ's work. Nevermore think Christ hath done all your work for you: for that is unbecoming the free spirit of the Gospel: but labor for that salvation, that he hath purchased and merited. Could such senseless objections prevail with those men, who ever seriously read that scripture in Tit. ii. 14; "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works?" Were this place seriously pondered by men, they would be ashamed to object any longer, that our duties and works are derogatory to the purchase of Christ; for he gave himself for this end, that he might purchase such a people, that might be zealous of good works. But, truly, when sloth and ignorance meet together, if you tell men what powers their natures have to work, and how necessary obedience is to salvation, that thereby you may excite and quicken their hearts to obedience; they, with the sluggard, fold their arms in their bosom, doing nothing, telling us these doctrines are Arminianism and flat Popery: whereas, in deed and in truth, they are as far distant from either of them, as light is from darkness: it is their ignorance and sloth only, that makes

them think so. But, deceive not yourselves: this doctrine is such that whether it take hold on your judgments and understandings now, I know not; but, this I know assuredly, it shall take hold of your consciences, either here or hereafter: and, then, it will not suffice you to make this excuse, either that you had no power to do any thing, or that Christ had already done all things for you.

And, so much, for the second objection.

OBJECT. iii. Others may object, that "This duty of working out our salvation, is inconsistent with, and prejudicial to, the freeness of God's grace, by which alone we are saved. If God save them only, that work for salvation; how then doth he save them freely, and how is it that by grace we are saved?"

In general, I answer: that salvation upon our working and obedience, is free salvation: and that, for four reasons.

1. Because *all our working is a natural duty, that we owe to God, as creatures to their Creator.*

Had God required the same things of us that now he doth, and never propounded a reward to encourage us, he had been just, and we had been as absolutely and as indispensably obliged to obey as we are now. We have not so great a right to salvation, as God hath to our obedience. God can challenge our service and obedience from us, because of our natural bond and obligation; as well as from that voluntary covenant, whereinto we have entered with God to be obedient: but we can only plead for salvation, because God hath made a promise, that he will save those that obey. Whether God had made that promise or not, yet he might have required the same obedience from us that now he doth, because we owe it to him naturally by our creation. And is it not now free grace and mercy, that, when God might have required obedience without a reward, yet he will bestow salvation according to that obedience? See what our Saviour saith, in Luke xvii. 9, 10; "Doth" the master "thank the servant because he did the things that he was commanded to do? I trow not. So even ye likewise, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants;" for, when we have done all, "we have but done that which was our duty to do." Yea, and our duty it was to do it, though God had never made a promise to reward what we have done: we are unprofitable servants, and deserve not so much

as thanks: and, if we do not merit thanks when we have done our utmost, how then can we merit salvation?

2. Because *our obedience is imperfect in this life: it is full of cracks and flaws.*

And if, to accept and reward the most perfect obedience with salvation, be an act of mercy and free grace; as it is, because it is our duty if there were no salvation promised; how much more is free grace magnified and glorified, in accepting and rewarding a weak and imperfect obedience with that salvation, which the most perfect obedience cannot deserve? For, when we have done all, "we have done that which was our duty to do:" and, if we could say so, doth the master thank the servant? No: But alas! "in many things we offend all." Now to reward that with eternal salvation, that deserves eternal damnation; to reward that work with life, that deserves to be rewarded with death; what is this, but the effect of rich and glorious grace? What is this, but to bestow heaven, not according to merit, but rather according to our demerit?

3. Because *there is no comparison between salvation and our obedience; and, therefore, free grace shines forth still.*

It is free grace, though we do obey. We obey, as creatures: God rewards, as a God. Our obedience is temporal; but our reward is eternal. Our obedience is mixed with rebellion; but the reward hath no mixture to take off the fullness and sweetness of it. Therefore, it is free grace still, to give an infinite reward to so mean an obedience; between which obedience and reward, there is no comparison nor proportion.

4. Because *though we are commanded to obey, yet that grace, whereby we do obey, is the gift of God.*

It is he, that works in us this obedience, which he rewards with salvation. And must not this then be wholly of free grace? To save upon an obedience wrought in us by God himself, is to save altogether as freely as if we were saved without any obedience at all.

And, so much, in answer unto the third objection.

OBJECT. iv. Others may say, that "It is a vain and most needless thing, to press this doctrine of working for salvation upon us. What! we work! If we are elected to salvation, we shall be saved, whether we work or not: and, if we are not elected, all our working will be to no purpose, for we shall never be saved by it."

To this I answer: We are to look to God's commands; not to

his decrees: to our duty; not to his purposes. The decrees of God are a vast ocean, whereinto many possibly may have curiously pried, to their own horror and despair; but few or none have ever pried into them, to their own satisfaction. This election, in particular, is not written in the plain word of God; but this duty is plainly written. If thou performest thy duty, thereby thou shalt come to know thy election. It is but a preposterous course, and that which will both discourage all endeavors and fill the soul with despair, to look first to God's decrees, and then to its own duty: whereas, indeed, the right method is, first to perform thy own duty, and thereby to be led into the knowledge of God's decrees. Question not, therefore, whether thou art elected or not; but, first, work for salvation: and, if thy work be good and thy obedience true, thereby thou mayest come to a certain knowledge that thou art elected. And, know this also, farther: that God, who elects to the end, elects also to the means: now obedience is the means and way to salvation; and, therefore, if thou art elected to salvation, thou art also elected to obedience. Say not, therefore, "If I am elected, I shall be saved whether I work or not:" there is no such thing: I may boldly say, if thou art elected and dost not work, it is impossible that thy election should save thee. What says the Apostle, 2 Thess. ii. 13? "God hath chosen us:" there is election: "chosen us to salvation;" there is the end: but how? "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:" chosen us to salvation, as to the end; but it is not an end to be obtained without sanctification. There is, indeed, an absolute election to salvation, whereby God, without respect of works, hath chosen some to salvation: but there is no election to salvation absolute, whereby God hath chosen any to salvation without works; that is, whether they work or not. If, therefore, you believe heartily and obey sincerely, then your election to salvation stands firm. Nay, the Scripture makes election to be terminated, as well in obedience as salvation: "elect," says the Apostle, "unto obedience, through sanctification of the Spirit:" in the former place it was, elect "to salvation, through sanctification:" but in this it is, "elect to obedience, through sanctification:" noting thus much to us, that none are elected to salvation, but those that are elected to obedience; and therefore it is unreasonable, yea it is contradictory, to say, "If I am elected, I shall be saved whether I obey or not," for none are thereunto elected but through obedience.

III. And now, having, as I hope, satisfactorily answered all objections and scruples, that may arise in the hearts of men against

this doctrine, I proceed to PRESS THIS DUTY of working for salvation upon their consciences: and I shall do it in a USE OF EXHORTATION.

Be persuaded then, O Sinners! to cast off your sloth and laziness; and to rouse yourselves from that drowsy slumber that you have long lain in, and to work for salvation. But, truly, when I consider, how powerful an orator and how mighty a charmer sloth is;—how easily it can stupefy and benumb reason, and lull men asleep on the top of a mast and on the brink of hell;—and, though God and man call upon them, "Sinners, sinners, bestir yourselves: work for your lives: you perish eternally, if you do not labor to lay hold on eternal life, for you are falling and hell-fire is under you:" yet, when we call and cry thus earnestly, how easily a careless, yawning, wretched sinner can slight all these admonitions; baffle all these arguments, motives, and persuasions, though urged upon him with all vehemence and tenderness of affection; and turn about, like a man besotted, falling fast asleep again:—when I consider this, truly I am apt to conclude, that it is but a desperate attempt to press men any more against their natures; and against so many disadvantages, that can soon frustrate the efficacy of weaker words: and am ready to give over in despair, with that of the prophet, "He that will be righteous, let him be righteous still: and he, that will be wicked, let him be wicked still." And, truly, were it not more for conscience of duty than for any hope of success, I would not speak one word more upon the subject: success, I mean, upon those, who are altogether carnal, whose hearts Satan hath filled, and whose ears Satan hath stopped; we may call long enough and loud enough, ere these men will awake; or, if they do sometimes give a look upwards, they soon close their eyes again and slumber away into destruction. And yet, truly, if variety of motives, if strength of arguments and persuasions would prevail, we might hope for this seldom-seen success.

Then let us consider these following particulars.

i. Consider, sinners, you have A GREAT AND WEIGHTY WORK TO DO; and, therefore, it is time, yea high time, that you were up and doing.

Believe it, sirs: God hath not placed you here in this world, as the leviathan in the great waters, only to play and sport: were it so, you might take your ease, fold your arms in your bosoms, and follow your delights and pleasures; and let him be blamed, that

ever should disturb or discourage you. I know not whether some may not think that we ministers are task-masters, and that we make more ado than needs. No, sirs: it is God, that hath set you your work: we do only tell you how great it is, and of how great concernment it is to you that it be done. And, if you will not do it, who can help it? We have no scourges nor scorpions to drive you to your work; but God hath, to punish you, if you neglect it. And why is it so generally neglected, but because men do not seriously consider how great it is? Most men acknowledge that it must be done: but, because they look upon it as that which may speedily and quickly be dispatched, they drive it before them from day to day, and think to huddle it up at the end of their lives: then, when they are fit for no other employment, and least of all fit for this employment, then they think to do the works of God.

I shall here lay down three particulars, to convince sinners of the greatness of this work: and, because it is so great a work, it requires that they should presently, without delay, set upon it.

1. *It is a work, in which sinners must undo all, that they have wrought in their whole lives before.*

O sinner, think: What hast thou been doing, these twenty, thirty, forty years, or more? Hast thou not, instead of working out thine own salvation with fear and trembling, been working out thine own condemnation without fear and trembling? Hast thou not been working the works of darkness? Hast thou not been working the works of thy father the devil, as our Saviour tells the Jews? Truly, this is not so much working, as making work: all this must be undone again, or you yourselves must be forever undone: you must unrip and unravel your whole lives, by a deep and bitter repentance: you are gone far in the way, that leads to death and destruction; and you must tread back every step, and at every step shed many tears, before ever you come into the way that leads to life and happiness. And is it not yet time to begin? Can the work of so many years be undone, think you, in one moment? No: sin and Satan make their works more durable and lasting, than to be so easily and speedily spoiled. It were the work of an age, yea of eternity itself, if possibly we could so spend it, rather than of a few faint late thoughts, to get a humiliation deep enough and a sorrow sad enough, to bear any the least proportion to any of the least sins that we have committed. Do not hope or think, that your many great and sinful actions shall ever be blown away with a slight and general confession; or that ever they shall be washed away with a slight and overly repentance.

What says holy David? "Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle:" Ps. lvi. 8; thou hast my wanderings, by number; but thou hast also my tears, by measure: there must be some proportion betwixt the humiliation and the sins: great sins call for great sorrow; and long continuance in sin requires a continued and prolonged repentance. Is it not then high time to begin? Have you not already made work enough for your whole lives, should they be longer than they are like to be? Nay, and will not every day of your lives make work enough for itself? What says our Saviour? "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof:" Mat. vi. 34. Truly, the evil, that we every day commit, is sufficient work for the sorrow and repentance of that day to undo. Now, then, begin this undoing work: the longer you delay, still the more will lie upon your hands; still, the more sins you have to repent of. We already complain, that the work, which God hath set us, is too hard and too grievous; and yet, such foolish creatures are we, that we make it more and more difficult by our delays; adding to the strictness of God's commands, the necessity of a severe repentance. And therefore it is prudence as well as duty, to begin this repenting, this undoing work betimes; that so, the greatness of the work, and the shortness of the time to do it in, may not at last dismay and confound us.

2. Consider *the great variety of duties, that must be gone through, in the working out of salvation;* and this will evince how great a work it is.

A Christian's work is a life full of actions and employments. There should be no gap nor void space at all in it; but all should be filled up with duties, ranked in their several orders; that, as soon as he passeth through one, he should enter upon another, that where one leaves him another may find him. Thus a Christian should go from one duty to another: from hearing the word, to meditation; from meditation, to prayer; from prayer, to the acting of grace: and, in all, there should be much striving and struggling with the heart, and much carefulness and circumspection over the way and life.

Now there are four great and usual duties, which every man hath to do; which are enough to fill up all the time of his life, were it stretched and tentered out to the end of our time.

(1) He is to get the truth and reality of grace wrought in him.

This is his first and general work. And this will cost a man much sweat and anguish: for this, he shall lie under many fears

and jealousies, lest hypocrisy and presumption should cause him to mistake in a matter of such infinite concernment.

(2) He is to draw forth and to act this grace, when once it is wrought in him.

This is the next work of a true Christian; continually to act faith, love, patience, humility, and to let all have their perfect work. And there is no moment of a man's life so idle, but all may administer some occasion or object for the exercise of grace.

(3) A Christian's next work is, continually to grow and increase in grace.

To "go from strength to strength:" to be "changed from glory to glory." Still to be adding cubits to his spiritual stature, till he is grown to such a height and tallness in grace, that his head shall reach into heaven, and be crowned there in absolute perfection, with a crown of glory and immortality. Here is that work, that will keep you in employment all your days; and, if you can find one spare minute in your whole lives wherein you have not some duty to perform, then give over and sit still.

But, besides all this,

(4) Another work of a Christian is, earnestly to labor after the evidence and assurance of grace in himself. "Give all diligence," says the Apostle, "to make your calling and election sure."

Still, a Christian must be ascending: ascending, from a probable conjecture, to a good persuasion; from a good persuasion, to a full assurance; from that, to a rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

These are the general works, that should take up the lives of Christians: and to these are subservient almost an infinite number of particulars; some whereof are means whereby these great things are obtained, others are concomitants or the effects and fruits of them; but I will not so much as mention any of them now.

For shame then, O Christians: since that your work is so great, why will you sit still, as if you knew not how to employ yourselves? Besides, there is great variety in your work; and this usually breeds some kind of delight: you are not always to be toiling and drudging at the same thing; but, as bees fly from one flower to another and suck sweetness from each of them, so should a Christian pass from one duty to another and draw forth the sweetness of communion with God from every one of them.

3. To evince the greatness of this work, consider, *it is a work, that must be carried on against many encounters and strong oppositions, that a Christian will certainly meet with.*

Within, are strong corruptions: without, are strong temptations. You have a treacherous and deceitful heart, within; and this traitor holds intelligence and league with your great enemy, the devil, without. You are sure to meet with difficulties, affronts, and discouragements, from a peevish, ill-conditioned world in which you live. Never any yet could escape free to heaven, without meeting with these things. And doth not all this call upon you to work and strive for salvation? Is it a time to sit still, when you have all this opposition to break through; so many temptations to resist; so many corruptions to mortify: Satan, that "old serpent," to repel, and make him become a flying serpent? Doth not all this require a firm constancy; and a fixed resolvedness to go through the ways of obedience, notwithstanding all opposition? These great things are not to be achieved, without great pains and labor. And, therefore, if you resolve to do no more than a few heartless wishes, no more than a few more heartless duties, will amount to, never raise your expectations so high as salvation: for, let me tell you, salvation will not be obtained at such a rate as this: no; there must be great strugglings and labor, with earnest contendings, if ever you intend to be saved.

And, thus much, for the first argument, taken from the consideration of the greatness of the work: to work salvation out, is a great work and requireth great pains.

ii. But, lest the setting out of the greatness of this work should rather deter and fright men from it, than excite and quicken their endeavors to it, let me add a second thing: and that is, to consider WHAT AN INFINITE, INCOMPARABLE MERCY IT IS, THAT GOD WILL ALLOW YOU TO WORK FOR YOUR LIVES; that he sets life and death before you, and gives them into your hands to take your choice.

If you will indulge your sloth, then you choose death; but life may be yours, if you will. It will, indeed, cost you much pains and labor; but, yet, it may be yours. And is it not infinite mercy, that salvation and happiness may be yours, though upon any terms?

Wicked men are apt to say, "Oh, how happy had we been, if God had never commanded us to work; if he had never required from us such harsh and difficult duties; if we were but once free from this hard task and heavy burden of obedience!" But, alas, foolish sinners! they know not what they say: as happy as they count this to be, yet, if God required no working from them, he

should then show them just so much mercy as he doth to the devils and damned spirits, and no more; from whom God requires no duty as well as from whom he receives no duty, and unto whom he intends no mercy.

You think it a hard restraint, possibly, to be kept under the strict commands of the law: "O, that God required no such observances from us!" but what do you desire herein, but only the unhappy privilege of the damned; to be without law and without commands? But, should God send to the spirits now imprisoned, and declare to them that if they would work they should be saved, O! how would they leap in their chains at such glad tidings; and count it part of salvation, that there was but a possibility of it! No, but God commands nothing from them, because he intends nothing but wrath upon them: he will not vouchsafe so much mercy to them, as to require those duties from them, that you repine and murmur at as grievous.

And, furthermore, consider this: if you do not now work, but perish under your sloth, in hell you will think it an infinite mercy if God would command you more rigid and severe obedience, than ever he commanded from you on earth. It would be a great mercy there, if it might be your duty to repent, and pray, and believe. Nay, you would count a command then, to be as comfortable as a promise; for, indeed, there is no command but implies a promise. No: but these things shall not so much as be your duty in hell: for there you shall be freed forever from this rigorous and dreadful law of God, that now you so much complain of and murmur against.

O! therefore be persuaded, while you are yet under the mercy of the law (give me leave to call it so), and while you have so many promises couched in every command, before God hath left off his merciful commanding, before the time of duty be expired, be persuaded to work. Delay not: you know not how long God will vouchsafe to require any thing from you; and, as soon as that ceaseth, truly you are in hell.

And this is the second argument to press this duty upon you. Work, and that speedily too. While you may work, there is hope, that, upon your working, you may be saved. And, therefore, while God calls upon you, and whilst he will accept of obedience from you, it is time for you to begin to work.

iii. Consider, WHAT A SHORT SCANTLING OF TIME IS ALLOWED YOU IN WHICH TO DO YOUR GREAT WORK.

And this I shall branch out into two particulars.

1. Consider *how sad it will be for your time to be run out, before your great work be done.*

Alas! what are threescore years, if we were all sure to live so long, from the date of this present moment? How short a space is it, for us to do that in, which is of eternal concernment! and, yet, how few of us shall live to that, which we so improperly call old age! Our candle is lighted; and it is but small, at the best: and, to how many of us, is it already sunk in the socket, and brought to a snuff! and how soon the breath of God may blow it out, neither you nor I know. Night is hastening upon us: the grave expects us; and bids other corpses make room for us. Death is ready to grasp us in its cold arms, and to carry us before God's tribunal: and, alas! how little of our great work is done! What can any show, that they have done? Where are the actings of faith, the labors of love, the perfect works of patience? Where are those graces, that are either begotten or increased? Where are the corruptions, that you have mortified? These are works, that require ages to perform them in: and yet you neglect them, that have but a few days, nay possibly but a few minutes, to do them in.

"But what! Is God severe? Is God unjust, to require so much work to be done in so little time?"

No: far be it from us to say thus. Though our work be great, yet our time is long enough to perform it in, if it were well improved. We do, indeed, consume away our precious days, and waste our life and light, exhaust our strength, and lay out our endeavors upon vanities and trifles, on nothing but emptiness and folly: and that life, which the Prophet tells us is but as a tale, truly we spend it as a dream: we sleep, and drowse, and suffer our precious minutes to run and waste away, doing nothing to any good purpose; till the night is shutting in, till the night of darkness comes upon us, and then the greatness of our work will confound us, and cause despair rather than excite endeavors. Have you never known any, who, at the close of their lives, having neglected their great work, have spent that little time, that they had then left them, in crying out for more time? and thus it may be with you also, if your consciences be not awakened sooner than by the pains and disquiets of a sick bed: then, with horror, you may cry out, "More time, Lord, more time." But it will not then be granted: the term is fixed: the last hour is struck: the last sand is run: and, as you and your work shall then be found, so you must go together into eternity. This is such a consideration, as must needs prevail

with all men, if they would but lay it to heart: "My time is but short and momentary: I am but of yesterday; and, possibly, I may not be to-morrow; and God hath suspended eternity upon the improvement of this moment: a few hours will determine mine everlasting state and condition: according as these few are spent, so will my doom be; either for eternal happiness or for eternal misery; and why should my precious soul be so vile in my own eyes, as to lose it forever through sloth and negligence? Why should I hearken to the allurements of my own corruptions, or to the enticements and persuasions of Satan's temptations? No: stand off, for I am working for eternity; an eternity, that is but a few days hence; a boundless, a bottomless, an endless eternity, into which I know not how soon I may enter: and woe to me, yea a thousand woes to me, that ever I was born, if my great work be not done before the days of eternity come upon me." This is such a motive, as methinks should make every man, that hears it and hath but a sense what eternity is, presently to bestir and rouse up himself, and give God and his soul no rest till his immortal soul be secured, and well provided for, for eternity. To me, there is no greater evidence of the witchcraft and sorcery, that sin and Satan use to besot the reason and judgment of rational creatures, than that men can hear of such truths, truths that are not to be denied or doubted, and yet live at such a rate as they do: so vainly, so fruitlessly, so lazily, so securely and presumptuously; as if their eternity were to be expected and enjoyed here, or that there were none to come hereafter.

2. The consideration of the shortness of our life, may serve as *a great encouragement to work.*

The consideration of the burthensomeness and trouble of working for salvation may, doubtless, fright many from engaging therein. Oh! it is a work very painful and laborious: and this discourageth them. But know, O sinner! though it be grievous, yet it is but short work: it is to last no longer, than our frail, short life doth last. And, oh! how unreasonable is it to complain, as most do of our work, as being too long and too tedious; and of our lives, as being too short and brittle! for our work is to be no longer than our lives. A child of God doth not, at least he should not, desire to live longer than his great work is done: and, truly, when it is finished, it is a great piece of self-denial in him, to be content to abide here in this world any longer: and, in the mean while, this may support him, that it shall not be long, that he shall thus wrestle with temptations, and thus struggle with corruptions. Death will come in to his help, and put an end to his toil and labor; and,

though he brings a dart in one hand, yet he brings a reward and wages in the other hand: and this may be his great encouragement.

iv. My next argument, to press this duty of working out our own salvation, shall consist of THREE OR FOUR GRADATIONS. And,

1. *We are all of us very busy, active creatures.*

The frame and constitution of our natures is such, as we must be working some work or other: and, therefore, since we must be working, why should we not work the works of God? We do not simply exhort sinners to work: neither, indeed, need we: you have active faculties and stirring principles within you, that must and will be still in employment; and, when your hands cease, yet then your hearts and thoughts are at work: your whole lives are nothing but actions; yea, when your thoughts themselves are most unbent and most remiss, when they are most vanishing and glimmering, so that yourselves scarce know what they are, yet then are they visibly working, though you perceive it not. Now, what is it, that God requires of you? It is not, that you should be more employed than you are, that you should do more than you do; for that is impossible, because you are never idle, doing nothing: but it is, that what you do, should be done in order unto heaven and salvation. And how reasonable is such a command as this! It is not more work, that God expects from you; only other work: your thoughts need not be more than they are; but they must be more spiritual than they are: your desires no more; but only more gracious: your actions no more; but only they must be more holy than now they are. Let but grace regulate what nature doth, and the art of working out your salvation is attained. The wheels of a watch move as fast and as quick, when it goes false as when it goes true; and, if the watch be but at first set right and true, the same activity, that makes it go false, will make the motions go right and orderly. Truly, you yourselves are like your watches: your faculties are the wheels of your souls; and they move and click as fast, when they go false, as when they go right; and, if grace doth but once set them right, the same activity of nature that makes them work falsely and go amiss, will also continue their motion orderly and regularly, when once they are set right. Well, then, whatever your trade be, whether it be a trade of sin, or whether it be a trade of holiness, you must be working at it. And, let me tell you, religion and holiness are so far from increasing your work, that they rather lessen and contract it: what says our Saviour? "Martha, Martha, thou art careful.....about many things:

But one thing is needful:" Luke x. 41, 42; so may I say; Sinners, you are careful, and busy yourselves about many things; but there is but one thing, that is necessary: many things, indeed, you trouble yourselves with: the cares of the world, the temptations of Satan the corruptions of your own hearts, these distract you; yea, very trifles and impertinences themselves give you full employment: this lust storms and rages; that lust flatters and entices: this is impetuous; that is insinuating: the one impels; the other allures: and, it may be, after all, conscience begins to grow terrible; giving the sinner no quiet in doing that, which lust would let him have no rest till he had done; so that, betwixt them, of all men's lives in the world, his is the most toilsome and vexatious.

Since, then, you can save no labor by being as you are, why will you not change your work? You are now in constant employment as you are, and no more is required of you in the ways of obedience. Nay, you are now divided, distracted, and even torn in pieces, betwixt divers lusts and pleasures; all which cry, "give, give," and all are eager and importunate, so that you know not which to turn to first: but, in working for salvation, your employment is but the one thing necessary, which though indeed it calls for the same endeavors and industry which now you use in the service of sin, yet by reason of its uniformity, is less distracting and less cumbersome.

And that is the first gradation.

2. *You must work either in God's service, or in the devil's drudgery.*

And choose you whether you would rather be Satan's slaves, or God's servants. Nay, indeed, choose whether? Is it a matter of choice with men, who have rational and immortal souls? Do you not all profess yourselves to be the servants of the living God? Do you not all wear his livery? Would not the vilest and most profligate sinner willingly lurk under the name and badge of a Christian; and count it a great wrong done him, should any so much as doubt of his salvation? And wherefore is this, but because they are ashamed of their service, and of their own black master? But, alas! it is in vain to renounce him in words: for, if your works be not for God, if they be not such as religion exacts, as the Holy Ghost inspires, as grace performs, and as salvation calls for from you, his slaves you are; and, though you profess to deny him, yet in your works you own him.

3. *If you work for Satan, you do but work for your own damnation.*

For work, you must and will: and this is all the reward and

wages, that you can justly expect from the service of sin and Satan, and, of this, a just God and a malicious devil will look that you shall not be defrauded; but, as your ephah hath been full of iniquity and abominations, so shall your cup be full of wrath and indignation. Think, O sinner, think how these masters, whom thou now servest, will in hell insult over thee and upbraid thee: "Is this he, our faithful and industrious servant? He, who preferred our misery, before his own happiness? Whose precious soul was not precious to him for our sakes? And is he now come, whither his ways led him? Prepare a place quickly for him. Let his darkness be horrid and dismal: his works were so. Let his chains be strong and massy: the bonds of his iniquities were so. Let his unquenchable fire be piercing and vehement: let his torment be next unto my own." This, this will be the insulting of your master then. O sinners, consider! Is this the reward and preferment, that you work for? "God forbid! mercy prevent!" you will say: nay, believe it, mercy will not prevent, God will not forbid, unless you yourselves labor to prevent it: all this must be your condemnation, as unavoidably as if God had no such attribute as mercy belonging to his nature. This sinners know, and are persuaded of the truth of, unless they are atheists. And, if you are, truly it will not be long before your own sense and feeling will convince you of the truth of these things, to your eternal grief and sorrow. And, if you do believe this, why do you not rouse up yourselves and fall to work? If you are resolved for hell, for a foreseen and forewarned hell, who then can stop you? And, unless you are resolved for hell, methinks I might have done, and need proceed no further. Tell me, therefore, O sinners, are you not all persuaded by these terrors? Will you not from this moment labor, struggle, and strive; and take any pains in the ways of obedience, rather than ruin your own souls, and thrust them down into the pit of destruction? I might be confident sinners thus resolve to do, were I speaking now to men that were themselves: but men's reasons are besotted; and their ears are open only to the devil, and to the base allurements of the flesh: and, when we have done our utmost in persuading sinners, in the end we must turn our exhortations to them into prayers to God for them, that he would snatch them as brands out of the fire and burning, into which they, like drunken men, are casting themselves, and in which they are lying down.

4. Once more: *The same pains, that possibly some take to damn their own souls, might suffice eternally to save them.*

The same toil and labor, that some undergo for hell and destruction, might have brought them to heaven and happiness, had it been but that way laid out. The prophet tells us of some, "that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart-rope:" Isa. v. 18; that is, they are so enslaved to the work of the devil, that he puts them into his team, and makes them draw and strain for their iniquities; and he doth them a courtesy when their sins come easily to them, for so the phrase imports. And we read of some in another prophet, that sin "with both hands earnestly:" Mic. vii. 3. And the Psalmist tells us of those, that devise mischief upon their beds, and that travail with iniquity: Ps. xxxvi. 4; vii. 14: that is; they are in as much pain and torment till their wicked designs be accomplished, as a woman in travail is till she be delivered. Sinners, since the work of sin is so toilsome, why will you not "work the works of God?" Doth that salvation, that follows obedience, fright you; or is heaven and glory become terrible to you? Is not this it, that all men desire? Do not your hearts leap at the mention of it? What then is it, that any rational man can pretend, why he will not work? Is it because you are loth to take pains? Why then are you so laborious in sinning? Why do you so sweat and toil in carrying faggots to your own fire? Why are you continually blowing up those flames, that shall for ever burn you? It is in vain to plead this any longer, that you are loth to take pains: for where are there greater drudges in all the world, than sinners? The devil can scarce find them work enough: they out-sin his temptations; and, had they not that corruption within, the scum whereof is continually boiling up in them, they must of necessity, I was going to say, sometimes be holy, for want of employment: Satan could not find them work enough. How restless and impatient are they, till they have done some wicked work! and, sometimes, they are more restless and impatient when they have done it, through the devil's temptations; and yet, notwithstanding these torments, they will do them again. Are there more drudges in the world than these? Doth God require more pains in his service, than these men take? No: he doth not: would but men do as much for their precious souls, as they do against them; would they do as much to save them, as they do to destroy and damn them; truly, their salvation would not lie upon their hands unwrought.

But some may say in their hearts, "It is true, indeed, we are convinced, that the work of sin is laborious; but, yet, there is pleasure in that labor: but to the works of obedience we find

reluctance: and, to struggle against that, is exceedingly irksome and grievous: and, therefore, we cannot work."

But is it so, indeed? Is it all peace and tranquillity with you, when you sin? Are your consciences so utterly seared, as that they make no reluctance, give you no checks or reproofs, when you sin? If they do, put that reluctance of natural conscience against sin, into the balance with the reluctance of natural corruption against obedience; and the most profligate sinner in the world shall find, though this is more strong and prevalent, yet that is more vexatious and tormenting. God requires no more labor from you, than you now take: nay, this labor shall not put you to so much torment, as sometimes you now feel: the same labor, with more content and satisfaction, may perfect your salvation, that now tends only to consummate your destruction. What madness then is it, for men not to be persuaded to work the works of God, when it will cost them less pains; I mean, less tormenting pains! You wear your lives in the service of sin; and, at the end of your days, you go down to hell; when, with as much ease, you might inherit life and glory, as you thus purchase hell and destruction. And is not this great folly and madness?

Bring, then, all these four gradations together, and look upon them all at once; and we shall find the argument so strong, that nothing can resist it, but the perverse reasonings of men's own wills: you will not, because you will not:—You must work. If you work not in God's service, you will work in the devil's drudgery:—If you work Satan's work, you must receive Satan's wages; which is the reward of eternal damnation. And the same labor, that you take to damn your own souls, might suffice to save them. Wherefore then shall not God employ you, as well as the devil? Hath he not more right to you? Why should you not work out your own happiness, as well as work out your own misery? Doth it not concern you more? If men would but set their reason at work in this particular, if they would but show themselves to be men, they would soon set grace at work and show themselves to be Christians also. It is but turning the streams of your actions into the right channel, and the work is done: since that will incessantly flow from you, why should they all fall like Jordan into the Dead Sea, when they might as well run into the infinite ocean of all happiness, and carry your souls along with them also? But,

v. Consider this also: THE DEVIL WORKS CONSTANTLY AND INDUSTRIOUSLY FOR YOUR DESTRUCTION. And will not you much more work for your own salvation?

See the place of the Apostle, 1 Pet. v. 8; He "walketh about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." And, therefore, when God questions him, "Whence comest thou," Satan? he answers, "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it:" Job i. 7. What pains doth he take, to prompt men with temptations! to suit objects and occasions to their corruptions! Still, he is at their right-hand, laying snares and traps for them, that they may fall as his prey. And wherefore makes he all this ado? Is it not to satisfy his malice and hatred against men's souls? And shall malice and rancor make the devil so laborious and unwearied to destroy souls, and shall not your own happiness and salvation make you much more diligent to save your souls? Is the devil more concerned in your ruin, than you yourselves are in your own salvation? Shall the death of your souls be more dear to him, than the life of your souls is to yourselves? Learn from Satan himself, how to rate and value your own souls. Did not he know them to be exceeding precious, he would never take so much pains to get them; and did you but know how precious they are, certainly you would never lose them so contentedly. Let the devil, if you will learn no otherwise, teach you the worth of your precious souls: and, since he thinks no pains too much to ruin them, why should you think any pains or labor too much to save them?

vi. Consider: YOU YOURSELVES DO LABOR AND TAKE PAINS, IN THINGS OF FAR LOWER AND LESSER CONCERNMENT, THAN THE SALVATION OF YOUR SOULS.

Men can rise up early and go to bed late, eat the bread of carefulness, and all to get some little inconsiderable piece of this world, to provide for a frail, short life here: and who is there, that thinks his pains too much? And why, then, should you not labor for a future life in another world, that you confess to be infinitely more glorious and desirable than any thing you can obtain here? To me, it is folly, so gross and senseless as to be bemoaned, if it were possible, with tears of blood, that men should so toil for the low conveniences of the world, and yet neglect the eternal happiness of their precious and immortal souls, as if they were not worth the looking after. Sinners, do you know what a vain, empty bubble, blown up by the creating breath of the Almighty, the world

is? Do you know it, and yet will you take pains for it, yet will you grasp and catch at it? Who would doubt, when we see men so busy about impertinences, and the trivial concernments of this vain world: who would doubt, but that they were far more anxious and careful about the things of heaven, and the concernments of their souls? Who would not conclude, but that they, who are so diligent about petty trifles, had certainly made sure that their great work was done? But, alas! would it not astonish men and angels, if we should tell them how foolish sinners are? Would it be believed, that rational creatures, who have immortal souls that must be forever saved or damned, should spend all their time and strength about nothing; never taking any care or thought what will become of them forever? Would such folly be believed to be in men? And yet of this madness are most men guilty. We may all of us be ashamed to lift up our heads to God, when we confess the world to be so vain and slight a thing, that if we should get all of it, nay should we get ten thousand of them, yet were they not all worth one soul; that, yet, we should be so foolish as to strive to get a vain world, to the neglect, yea to the contempt, of our precious souls. It is such folly, as men would scarce suspect that any persons should be guilty of, if it were not seen daily in the practices of almost all men.

vii. Consider this: ARE YOU AMBITIOUS? DO YOU AFFECT TRUE HONOR AND DIGNITY?

Yes, I know this is the great idol of the world: that, which every one falls down to and worships. Well then, sinners, here is a way to prefer you all. To work for salvation, is the most honorable employment in the world; an honor, that will pose and nonplus the most towering and raised ambition, when once it is spiritualized. Alas! what poor and contemptible things are the grandees and great ones of the world! though they take great state and pomp upon them, and will scarce own their inferiors for their fellow-creatures, nay will scarce own God himself for their superior; yet are they but like painted flies, that play and buzz awhile in the sunshine, and then molder away and come to nothing! All worldly honor and pomp is but imaginary. But would you have that, which is solid and substantial? Christ tells you how it is to be attained: "If any man serve me, him will my Father honor:" John xii. 26. Whatever honor we have, we hold it by service: our work is not only duty, but preferment also: "If any man serve me," he shall be honored. Would you be enrolled for right

honorable in heaven's treasury? Would you be peers of that kingdom, with saints and glorified angels? Then honor God. And how shall you honor him, but by obeying him? And him, who thus honors God, God will honor. This is the only real honor: all other is but airy, fictitious titles; like ciphers, which, as they are placed, stand for hundreds and thousands, but are all of the same value when huddled together. So, truly, the great ones of the world, if not made honorable by obedience to God, have but imaginary excellence; and, when death once shuffles and huddles them together, nobles with ignobles, will the dust and ashes of the one stand at a distance and make obeisance to the other? No. All honor here signifies no more than a king upon a stage. But, here, is a way to attain true honor: here, is the way to it, by becoming servants; not to command, but to obey; not to be imperious over others, but to work yourselves. This is true honor.

Now I shall, in three things, demonstrate the honor of working for salvation; that, if men be not very lowly spirited, they may be excited unto this honorable work.

1. *It is pure, spiritual, refined work.*

In services among men, the less of filth and drudgery there is in them, the more creditable they are accounted. It is an honor to be employed in higher and more cleanly work, when others are busied about baser employments. Christians, your work is the highest and most noble service imaginable: you are not at all to set your hands to any foul office: you have nothing to do with that mire and sink, in which wicked men are raking; yea, and it is their work to do it: no; but your work is all spiritual, consisting of the same pure employment about which the angels in heaven spend their eternity. Holy thoughts, divine affections, heavenly meditations, spiritual duties, in these lies your work; which, because of its purity, is therefore very honorable.

2. Your work is honorable, because *it is the service of a most honorable Master.*

We account it a great credit, to tend immediately upon the person of some prince or potentate: but what is this, to their honor, who are called always to attend upon the person of God himself, who is "King of kings and Lord of lords;" to be continual waiters about his throne? God hath but two thrones: his throne of glory in the highest heavens, about which angels and glorified saints are the attendants; and his throne of grace, to which you are called. Angels and saints are but your fellow-attendants: and, if they see his glory in the highest exaltation, you are admitted to

see it in the next degree. Yea, and herein is your honor so great, that you are capable but of one preferment more; and that is, of being removed from one throne to the other, from attending upon the throne of grace to attend upon the throne of glory: so great is your honor.

3. *Your work is such, as makes you, not so much servants, as friends of God.*

It is an honor to be servant unto a king; but, much more, of a servant, to become a favorite. Thus it is in the service of God. You are not only servants, but friends and favorites. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you:" a strange speech! One would think the doing of what is commanded, is the office of a servant, rather than of a friend: no, says Christ: "Henceforth I call you not servants.....but.....friends: Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." And, certainly, no title so glorious, as that, which God put upon Abraham, to be "the friend of God." Well, then, let wicked men go on scoffing and mocking at obedience in the people of God, let them look on them as poor and low-spirited persons; yet can there be no honor like unto theirs, to be attendants upon, yea the friends of, the Great God of Heaven: and there can be no discredit so base as theirs, who are slaves to the devil, who is God's slave; to be a slave unto the devil, whom the people of God have in part subdued and overcome, and over whom they shall shortly at once perfectly triumph.

IV. Having thus, by several arguments, pressed this great duty of working out our own salvation, I should now proceed to some other things that are necessary to be spoken unto from this doctrine. But because this is a duty of so vast importance, and of so universal concernment; and the slothfulness and backwardness of many so great, and, if persisted in, will be so ruinous and destructive, I SHALL FURTHER URGE THE PRACTICE OF THIS DUTY upon the consciences of sinners, by these following CONSIDERATIONS.

i. THIS WORKING FOR SALVATION IS THE MOST DELIGHTFUL WORK AND EMPLOYMENT IN WHICH A CHRISTIAN CAN BE ENGAGED.

What is it, that makes the whole world so busy in the service of sin and Satan, but only pleasure, which they either find or imagine? The devil baits all his temptations with this enticing witchcraft, which the world calls pleasure; and this is that, which makes them so successful. But, hath the devil engrossed all pleasure unto his

service? Can the ways of God promise no delight? Are they only rough and rugged ways? David certainly thought otherwise, when, speaking of the commandments of God, he tells us, they were "sweeter than the honey and the honey-comb:" Ps. xix. 10: he could squeeze honey out of them: it is an expression, that sets forth the exceeding pleasantness and delight, that are to be found in the ways of obedience. And, truly, the whole book of Psalms is abundantly copious, in setting forth that delight, that is to be found in the ways of God. Ask, therefore, the children of God, who are the only sufficient judges in this matter, and they will tell you with one consent, that they know no delight on earth comparable to that delight that is to be found in obedience. Indeed, if you are only taken with a soft, luxurious, washy pleasure; this is not to be found in the ways of holiness: but, if a severe delight can affect you, a delight that shall not effeminate but ennoble you; if you desire a masculine, rational, vigorous pleasure and delight; you need not seek any further for it, than in the ways of obedience.

There are two things, that make this working for salvation to be so pleasant: the suitableness of this work to the agent or worker, and the visible success and progress of the work itself: and both these make the working out of salvation exceedingly pleasant and delightful to the people of God.

1. *It is a work suited to their natures;* and that makes it pleasant.

As Jesus Christ had, in a physical sense, so every Christian hath, in a moral sense, two natures in one person. There is the divine nature, or the nature of God; and there is the human, corrupt nature, the nature of sinful man. And each of these has inclinations suited unto it: there is the carnal part, and that is too apt to be seduced and drawn away with the pleasures of sin, that are objects proportioned to the carnal part; but then there is also a divine, and, if I may so call it, a supernatural nature, imprinted by regeneration, that only doth relish heavenly and spiritual things: so that it is not more natural to a godly man, by reason of the propensities of the old nature, to sin against God; than it is natural to him, by reason of the propensities of the new nature, to obey and serve God. Now when nature acts suitably to its own sway and *pondus*, this must needs cause two things: first, facility and easiness; secondly, delight and complacency. Streams flow from the fountain with ease, because they take but their natural course: so the works of obedience flow easily from that fountain-principle of grace that is broken up in the hearts of the children of God, because they flow naturally from them; and, therefore, because

nature makes things easy, that easiness will make them pleasant and delightful. It is true, indeed, when they work, there is an opposition and reluctance from their other contrary nature; for, as they act suitably to the one, so they act quite contrary to the other nature: but doth not the gracious and new nature as strongly wrestle against and oppose the workings and eruptions of the old nature, as the old doth the workings of the new? It doth: and therefore you, that are truly regenerate, never sin because of the easiness of it, because of its suitableness, because you must offer violence to your nature if you resist a temptation: do you not offer violence to your nature, if you close with that temptation? You are not all of one piece, if I may so speak, if you are regenerate. And what! must the corrupt part only be indulged and gratified, and must the renewed part be always opposed? Why should not grace, since it is as much, nay more yourself than sin is, why should not that have the same scope and liberty to act freely as sin doth? Truly, these things are riddles to wicked men; and they are unfit judges in this case: they wonder what we mean, when we speak of easiness and delight in ways of obedience, which they never found to be otherwise than the most burdensome things in the world. And, truly, it is no wonder: for they have no principle suited to these things: they are made up only of the old nature, that is as contrary and repugnant to them as darkness is to light. But, if once God renew and sanctify them, then they will confess as we do, that the works of God have more easiness in them than the generality of the world do imagine. And therefore St. Paul tells us, that he delighted "in the law of God after the inward man:" Rom. vii. 22. But why after the inward man, but because though his corrupt part was contrary thereunto, yet his renewed part, which he calls his inward man, was suited to the duties of the law of God, and carried him out as naturally to obedience as the spark flies upward? And, hence it is, that the children of God delight in the ways of obedience, because they suit with their new nature that is implanted in them.

2. Another thing, that makes working for salvation so delightful is, *that visible success, that the children of God gain; and that visible progress, that they make in this work.*

Nothing doth usually cause greater delight in work, than to see some riddance in it: and that we are like, at length, to bring it to some issue. So, truly, this is that, which mightily delights the children of God: to see that their work goes forward; that their graces thrive; that their corruptions pine and consume away; that

they are much nearer salvation, than when they first believed; that they are perfecting holiness in the fear of God, and every day growing nearer unto heaven and happiness than other; and that, these works of theirs are now imperfect, yet they shall be shortly finished and consummate in glory.

Well, then, if pleasure and delight do affect you, here you see is that, which is solid and substantial: it springs from success in your work, and from that suitableness that is in your renewed part thereunto. And, therefore, the more work, the greater delight you find; because the greater progress you make, and the more suitable to it your will becomes. Nay, your delight is of the same nature with that, which you shall enjoy in heaven. The work, in which the blessed are there employed, is of the same nature with yours: only, their suitableness to it is perfect, and therefore their delight and pleasure are perfect: and, accordingly, the more suitable your hearts are to your work, the more delight and pleasure you will find in it. This is that, which makes heaven a place of happiness, because there is no corruption, no body of sin and death there, to make those duties, that are there required from glorified saints, to be irksome and grievous to them.

ii. Consider THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF YOUR REWARD.

"Doth Job fear God for nought?" was the cavil of Satan, when God applauded himself that he had such a servant as Job was upon the earth. The devil himself thought it no wonder, that Job should fear and serve a rewarding God; a God, whose hands are as full of blessings, as his mouth is full of commands. And, yet, what were these great somethings, for which the devil envies Job; and thinks every one would have done as much as he, if they had but as great a recompense for it? It was but hedging him about, but blessing the works of his hands, and increasing his substance; as it is in Job i. 10. Alas! these are poor, mean rewards, to what God intends to bestow: such rewards they are, as that God still reckons himself in arrears to his children, till he hath given them something better than he can bestow upon them here upon earth: these things he casts but as crumbs unto dogs; when he reserves a far better portion for his children. And yet Satan thinks Job well paid for his service, in having these lower enjoyments, in causing the works of his hands to prosper: "Doth Job" serve "God for nought?" And, therefore, if Satan doth not wonder that Job fears and serves God for temporal mercies, will it not be to the great wonder of Satan himself that you should not fear and serve God,

who have infinitely better things promised to you than temporal mercies are? Do you deserve your breath, in spending it some few hours in prayer? Or, do you deserve your plentiful estate, by laying out some small part of it for God? Why, to be able to think or speak, to enjoy health and strength, are such mercies, though outward mercies, as can never be recompensed to God; although you should think of nothing but of his glory, and speak of nothing but of his praise; although you should impair your health and waste your strength, and languish away in the performance of holy duties. These, though they are obligations to obedience, yet they are not the reward of obedience: no; far higher and more glorious things are provided, promised, and shall be conferred upon you, if you will but work.

For there are, first, your standing wages; and that is eternal salvation; no less. And, secondly, besides this, many special gifts accrue to God's servants, in their performance of his service. And are not here reward and wages enough?

1. *There is that eternal weight of glory, that shall be the reward of the saints in heaven.*

This is so great, that it is impossible for you to conceive it. As the Apostle speaks: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." 1 Cor. ii. 9.

If St. Paul were now preaching, and pressing this very consideration of the infinite, glorious reward, it would possibly be expected, that he, who enjoyed a translation, and was admitted as a spy into the land of promise, should, at his return, make some relation of it, and discover something of the riches and glory of that place: and would not all flock about him, as men do about travelers, to inquire for a description of the country whence they come? "Who are the people and inhabitants? What are their manners and customs? What is their employment? Who is their king, and what subjection do they yield unto him?" Thus inquisitive, truly, our curiosity would be. And, yet, when St. Paul purposely relates his voyage to the other world, all that he speaks of it is only this, "I knew a man....caught up into paradise, and who heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful (or possible. Marg.) for a man to utter." 2 Cor. xii. 4.

The glory of heaven is such, that it can never be fully known, till it be fully enjoyed. And, yet, if heaven were ever made crystally transparent to you, if ever God opened you a window into it and then opened the eye of your faith to look in by that window,

think what it was that you there discovered, what inaccessible light, what cherishing love, what daunting majesty, what infinite purity, what overloading joy, what insupportable and sinking glory, what rays and sparklings from crowns and sceptres; but more, from the glances and smiles of God upon the heavenly host, who forever warm and sun themselves in his presence: and, when you have thought all this, then think once again that all your thoughts are but shadows and glimmerings, that there is dust and ashes in the eye of your faith that makes all these discoveries come infinitely short of the native glory of these things; and then you may guess, and guess somewhat near what heaven is.

Nay, as God, by reason of his infinite glory, is better known to us by negatives, than by affirmatives; by what he is not, than by what he is: so is heaven, by reason of the greatness of its glory, better known to us by what it is not, than by what it is: and we may best conceive of it, when it is told us, there is nothing there, that may affright or afflict us; nothing, that may grieve or trouble us; nothing, that may molest or disquiet us; but we shall have the highest and sweetest delight and satisfaction, that the vast and capacious soul of man can either receive or imagine. Are you now burdened with sin and corruption; those infirmities, that though they are unavoidable, yet make your lives a burden to you? There, the old man shall never more molest you: that body of sin and death shall never enter with you into life: the motions of sin shall forever cease in that eternal rest. Are you here oppressed with sorrows? Do afflictions overwhelm you? There, God shall kiss your swollen eyes dry again, and wipe with his own hands all tears from your face. Are you pestered here with temptations; and doth the evil one, without intermission, haunt you with black and hellish thoughts, with dreadful and horrible injections? There, you shall be quite beyond the cast of all his fiery darts; and, instead of these, you shall have within you an ever-living fountain, bubbling up spiritual and sprightly contemplations and holy raptures forever, such as you never knew when you were here upon earth, no not when you were in the most spiritual and heavenly frame. Are you here clouded and cast down with desertions; and doth God sometimes hide his face from you in displeasure? In heaven, there shall be an everlasting sunshine: God shall look freely and steadfastly upon you; and you shall no more see him "through a glass darkly, but face to face," without any interruption or obscurity.

Think, O soul, and then think of any thing else if thou canst

"What is it, to see 'the Father of lights' in his own rays? What is it, to see 'the Sun of Righteousness' lie in the bosom of 'the Father of lights?' What is it to feel the eternal warmth and influence of the Holy Ghost, springing from both these lights? What is it, to converse with holy angels and 'the spirits of just men made perfect;' to join with them in singing the same hallelujahs forever?" And, when you have thought all this, think once more, "Heaven is all this, and more also."

Well, then, since heaven is such, and since such a heaven as this is may be yours, what should I say more, but only, with the Apostle, "Having these promises, dearly beloved," promises of so certain and vast a glory as this is, "let us cleanse" and purify "ourselves from all filthiness" and pollution, both "of the flesh and spirit," and perfect "holiness in the fear of God?" 2 Cor. vii. 1. Is this heaven attainable, upon your working? Will God give it as wages, after working? Will he share stars, will he share himself and his Christ among you? Truly, methinks Christians should not have patience to hear any more: methinks, it is too much dullness, to endure another motive besides this. Why do you not interrupt me, then? Why do you not cry out, "What shall we do that we may work the works of God?" Why do you not say and pray, Lord, work in us, "both to will and to do, of thy good pleasure?" Why is there not such a holy tumult and disturbance among you; some questioning, some praying, some resolving, all some way or other testifying a sense of salvation upon you? But, alas! there is a general silence. Men and women sit as quiet in their seats, as if their seats were filled rather with monuments than with men; as if heaven and eternal salvation were of no concernment for them to look after. And wherefore is all this, but because their sight is short and their faith weak? They do not see afar off, nor believe afar off. Heaven they look upon as at a great distance, and very unwilling they are to go so long upon trust; and, sensual persons as they are, they look for present reward and present wages, and will not stir till they have received it. And this is the reason, why the consideration of this great and infinite glory affects men no more, they look for something present.

Well, be it so. Will God's work bring in no present profit? It will; and that, such as you yourselves shall acknowledge to be great. And, therefore,

2. Besides those set wages, that are to be received at the end of our lives, *there are many special gifts, that accrue to God's servants in the performance of their work.* As,

(1) Such are assured, that God will provide for them while they are doing his work.

He hath assured them of the mercies and good things of this life by promise. I do not say of the troublesome abundance of them; but of the enjoyment of them, so far forth as they are mercies and good things: "Godliness," says the Apostle, "is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come:" 1 Tim. iv. 8. It hath the promise of this life; and that is a large charter, by virtue whereof God feeds them and clothes them, and provides sustenance and comfortable enjoyments for all those that work in his service. And, therefore, that I may note it by the way, most men greatly mistake, that labor and toil in the world to get riches and great estates: this is not the right thriving course: if you would grow rich, "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness:" "Work out your own salvation:" labor for the true riches; and this will not only increase and improve your inward graces, but increase and improve your outward mercies also. It is true, indeed, earthworms may, by carking and caring, by pinching and drudging, increase their heap of dirt: but, let who will, for my part I will not nor cannot, call that man a rich man, that hath more curses than enjoyments. Well, thus we see what great rewards God gives his servants: he gives them not only those of another life, but those of this life so far as they are mercies.

(2) As God provides for his servants while they are working, so their very work is wages and reward enough for itself.

If God should only give us our labor for our pains, as we use to say, and never bestow a penny more upon us than what we get in his service, we were even in that sufficiently rewarded. It was, certainly, a violent pang of distempered zeal in that person, that carried fire in the one hand and water in the other; and, being demanded a reason of it, gave for answer, that he would burn up Paradise and quench hell-fire, that so God might be served and holiness embraced, upon no other motives than themselves. This was a violent pang, and cannot be allowed: this fire was strange fire, and this water was too much muddied to be water of the sanctuary. But yet, certainly, that man, who, abstracting from the consideration of heaven and hell eternal rewards and punishments, would not rather choose the works of God and the ways of holiness, than the works of sin and the ways of iniquity, let that man know he never yet had much acquaintance with that way and with that work. What says holy David, concerning the commandments

of God? "In keeping of them there is great reward:" not only after keeping them, when those commands, that have here been the rule of our holiness and obedience, shall in heaven become the measure of our reward and happiness: but, "in" the very "keeping of them," while we are observing and obeying, there is so great a reward, that we should have no cause to complain should God bestow no more upon us, than to suffer us to obey his law. For,

[1] Herein we maintain communion with God and Christ, through the Holy Spirit.

What is communion, but a mutual intercourse of grace and duty; when grace received reflects back again in the returns of duty? Then is communion maintained between God and the soul, when we return duty for grace. Now is this nothing, to enjoy fellowship and communion with the great God of heaven and earth; to be admitted to him; to walk and converse familiarly with him, and to enjoy him; to see him, who is invisible: to lean upon him, who is almighty; to enjoy him, who is infinite? Is all this nothing? Will not the souls of those, who have by experience tasted the sweetness of these things, cry out, "They are so excellent and transcendent, that there is but one thing more desirable, and that is immediate enjoyment?" What is heaven itself but communion with God at a nearer hand? Here it is by faith, there, by vision: here, by ordinances; there, by immediate influences: here, it is by duty; there, by union. And, therefore, if the consideration of a future heaven be not cogent and prevailing with you, behold here is a heaven at present: here is happiness for your work, as well as for your reward. It was nobly spoken by Carriciolus: "Cursed," says he, "be that man, who preferreth the whole world before one hour's communion with Jesus Christ." And, certainly, they, who have once tasted the sweetness of this communion, will subscribe to that anathema.

[2] Usually, great peace and tranquillity of conscience attend and accompany this work of salvation; that fill the soul with as great a calm, as the world had the first morning of its creation, when there was no wind or tempest to discompose it.

Never is the soul more at rest, than when it is most at work. I dare appeal to the experience of the people of God, in this case. Do not your most solemn feasts come in by your obedience? Doth ever conscience look so friendly and pleasantly upon you, as when it finds you active in the ways of God? it then wears not a wrinkle nor frown upon its face: as sin ruffles it, so duty smooths

it out again; and this causeth such peace and quietness in the inward man, and yields more satisfaction than all the noise and ruffling gallantry and jollity in the world. "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that, in simplicity and godly sincerity....we have had our conversation in the world:" 2 Cor. i. 12. So that, if men care not for the enjoyment of God, yet if they love the enjoyment of themselves, if they would avoid discords and civil wars in their own breasts, this were enough to excite them to this pacifying work, that atones and reconciles conscience unto themselves.

[3] In this working for salvation, God gives many evident testimonies of his special favor and acceptance, unto the souls of his servants.

"Thou meetest him," says the prophet, "that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness." "Thou meetest him:" how? not to contend with him, as with Jacob; not to slay him, as thou didst Balaam: but to embrace him; to reveal and manifest thyself unto him. If you have any comfortable evidences that God is yours, in a strict bond of an everlasting and unalterable covenant, and that you are accepted by him in the Beloved, examine how you attained to this evidence: was it not through obedience and working? This is the way, whereby God manifests himself unto the souls of his: and, should your comfortable persuasions not come in thus by obedience and working, they are but enthusiastic and groundless presumptions, and not true and divine assurance. The Apostle, in 2 Pet. i. 10, exhorts us, to make our "calling and election sure:" but how is that to be done? It is by giving "diligence." What is it men desire and wish for, next to heaven? Is it not assurance of it? Would you not have the terrors and torments of conscience, apprehending and anticipating your own condemnation, eased and removed? Would you not have the unquiet tossings and fluctuations of your minds, because of the uncertainty of your future state and condition, settled and confirmed? Then be persuaded to work: believe it, this evidence is never received in any other way than in a way of duty: God will not hold his light of assurance to them, who will not work the works of obedience.

[4] Those, that are diligent in working for salvation, many times have high spring-tides of joy: joy, that is unspeakable and glorious, that rusheth in upon the soul and ravisheth it with a sweet and potent delight, while it is in ways of obedience.

Now this, though it be not ordinary with every Christian, yet God sometimes vouchsafes it, especially to the most laborious work-

ing Christians; as a cordial to revive and quicken them, that they should not faint and grow weary in their work. He gives them, many times, such foretastes of future glory, such bright glimpses of himself passing before them, that they scarce know wherein their state differs from the state of the glorified; unless it be that it is shorter in the duration, lasting not so long as theirs.

Should you, then, be asked, as they were in the parable, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" you could not return the same answer as they did, "because no man hath hired us:" for God hath hired you; and that, at no less a rate than all these great and glorious things that have been propounded to you do amount unto: a glorious heaven; a blessed work, that is accompanied with communion with God, peace of conscience, assurance of divine favor and joy in the Holy Ghost. And, if all this will not persuade you, certainly you set a mighty price upon your own sloth. Only let me say this, beware that these souls of yours, that you will not part with to God for salvation, beware you do not sell them to the devil for nothing.

(3) Consider your encouragements after your work is done: there is an eternal rest that waits you.

I have already considered heaven, as a reward for working: let us now consider it, as a rest after working. And so the Apostle tells us, "there remaineth a rest for the people of God:" Heb. iv. 9: and, in Rev. xiv. 13, we read, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."

[1] They rest from their labor, in working under affliction.

Sometimes, afflictions are spurs and incentives; and, sometimes, they are burdens and discouragements, to obedience. But, when we arrive at heaven, we shall no longer need the spur to quicken us: nor shall we any longer bear that burden to oppress us; but shall cast it down at heaven's gate, where never sorrow nor suffering durst yet appear. And,

[2] In heaven you shall rest from your labor, in working under desertion.

Now, though you do work; yet, it may be, you apprehend God frowning upon you, and finding fault with all that you do. Now, it may be, though God doth cause the clear light of his precepts and Spirit to shine before you, to direct you what your work is that you should do; yet he makes it dismal darkness behind you, and shuts up the light of his comfort that you cannot see what work you have done. And this is your great trouble: you work

and labor, and yet you know not whether you shall be accepted: "Obedience were easy and pleasant work," says the soul, "if I knew that God did regard me: but, alas! I pray, and he shuts out my prayer from him: I lay hold upon him, but he shakes me off in displeasure: I obey, but he rejects all my services: and this is the anguish and torture of my life." This, indeed, is matter of great grief and trouble. But know, O soul, thou shalt not long work thus in the dark: shortly, thou shalt be above these clouds; and then thou shalt see, that those prayers, which thou thoughtest were vainly scattered and lost in the air, are become a cloud of sweet incense hovering before the throne of God: and that those tears, which thou thoughtest were dropped in vain upon the earth, are all gathered up and preserved in God's bottle: and that those poor duties of thine, which, for their own meanness and vileness, thou thoughtest God would scorn, yet, through that worth that is put upon them by the intercession of Christ, are ranked in the same degree of acceptance as the most perfect services of the angels themselves. Have but patience a while, and continue working, and thou shalt see a happy issue; when the clouds of darkness and desertion, that now lie upon thy spirit, shall be all scattered and blown away.

[3] You shall also rest from your labor, in working against the continual workings of your own corruptions; which shall then, at once, both cease to act and cease to be.

And this, indeed, is the great thing, that makes it such a blessed rest to the people of God. Indeed, God cuts you out your work, in his commands; but it is the old man within you, that makes it to be tedious, irksome, and difficult unto you. God makes it not so, but your corruption.

And this it doth, two ways:

By deadening your heart to it: and,

By turning your heart against it.

Deadness and dullness to and averseness from the ways of holy obedience, are the greatest cause of all that toil and pains, that most take in the work and service of God, if ever they will bring it to a good issue.

Now both these shall shortly cease and be removed, if you but wait and continue striving against them.

1st. You shall rest from all that labor, that you take with a dead and heavy heart in the ways of God.

Now, you are continually calling upon it, "Awake, awake, my glory:" now, you are continually tugging it, to get it a little more

forward; lifting it up, to get it a little higher towards God and heaven: now, you stand in need of continual quickening grace, to actuate and excite those lumps of lead, that lie heavy within your breasts: and it is the greatest disquietude of your lives, that you find your hearts so heartless and listless to what is holy and spiritual: it is with them, as with some great bells, that you must pull long at the rope before you can make them sound. Is not this the daily complaint of God's children, that their hearts are dull and heavy, and they cannot raise them? And this makes the ways of obedience, yea this makes their very lives, become burdensome. Well, have but patience for a while, and continue still to struggle against this sad indisposition, and it will not be long before you shall rest from this labor also. Though now you are as birds, whose bodies are too heavy for their wings; when you stretch them forth, and would fain be soaring to heaven, you can only run up and down and flutter upon the earth: yet, shortly, these heavy and gross bodies shall fall off, and you shall be all wing; free from all deadness and straitness, distraction and weariness, in the ways of God, that now afflict you. Then shall your affections be always intent, and not languish; always burning, and yet shall never waste nor consume. Every motion of your soul shall then shoot itself to God as quick as the lightning, and yet constant as the sunbeams. And those, who are now outstripped by weak and underling Christians, shall then be able to keep pace in their obedience, even with the holy angels themselves. And, then,

2dly. In heaven, there shall be a resting from all that labor, that the people of God now take in the ways of holy obedience; through the averseness of their hearts from them, and the opposition of their hearts against them.

There is that contradiction in the carnal part against what is holy and spiritual, that the godly cannot bring themselves to the performance of it without much strife and contention: "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit:" and, when the spiritual part calleth for holy thoughts and heavenly affections, the corrupt and fleshy part sends forth noisome and fetid vapors; obstructing the good that we would do, and infecting that little good that we do perform: so that, as if working were not a sufficient employment, a Christian must fight that he may work: and this is it, that makes working for salvation so laborious, because we must fight and work at once. But, it shall not be long, before that, which hinders, shall be removed: and, then, as you are not under a sad necessity of offending God, so also you shall be under a most blessed necessity of serving

God; and shall find no more trouble in that service, than in those actions which you now cannot but do. And thus shall you have a happy rest from all that labor and pains, that your corruptions here made you take. And, therefore, be encouraged to persevere in well-doing: perfect the work which you have undertaken, in spite of all opposition from your own corrupt hearts; for, assure yourselves, this troublesome inmate shall not long disquiet you.

I might also add,

[4] You shall then rest from your labor, in working against Satan's temptations; who is now buffeting you, while you are here upon earth; but, in heaven, the evil one shall not approach near to touch you.

There, you shall no more trouble yourselves, to know how to distinguish between the injections of Satan and the ebullitions of your own corruptions; for you shall know neither, there. You shall then stand no more on your own guard, and keep sentinel to your own soul; nor conflict with any of Satan's temptations: but shall forever triumph in victories and conquests over them.

This is that blessed rest, that you shall shortly possess, if you will but now work. And what is it, that comforts the painful laborer, but this, that, though his work be hard and difficult, yet the evening will soon shut in, and he shall then betake himself to quiet rest and repose? What is it, that comforts the weary traveller, but this: every step of his long way brings him nearer to his home, where he shall enjoy a longer rest? And shall not the same encourage and support you, in your way and work? What though the work be painful and laborious: yet, it will not be long, before you shall lie down in the bed of the grave; and sweetly sleep away a short night of oblivion, that is between this and the resurrection; and your tired and weary souls shall then repose in the bosom of God himself. What though the way be long and tedious to the flesh: yet, you are traveling to your father's house, where you are sure to be welcome; and where you shall enjoy an eternity of rest and repose; and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the whole ring of glorious saints, discoursing to them of the dangers and difficulties that you have passed through in getting to them. Doth it not sweeten the toil and pains that you take in your youth, to think that thereby you are laying up that, whereupon you may live at ease hereafter, and spare the weakness of old age? And is it not much more rational, that, while you are in this world, which may be called the youth of eternity, you should lay up a good

foundation; and treasure up a large, rich stock, upon which you might live at ease forever? Why should you not be as wise and politic for heaven, as for a little of the perishing things of this world? Will you labor that you may rest here, where your rest shall certainly be disquieted and you shaken out of it? And will you not labor that you may rest in heaven, where alone you can enjoy an everlasting rest?

I know it is that inveterate prejudice, which men have taken up against the ways of God, that they are painful and laborious, that invalidates all reasons and arguments which we bring to persuade them to work. Rest! that is it, which they would have: and, though God tells them they shall have an eternal rest, if they will but work awhile; and tells them, on the other hand, that they shall never enter into rest if they do not work, that they shall never enjoy more ease than what they can find in hell itself where their groans and bellowings together with the smoke of that bottomless pit shall ascend up forever: yet, such is the madness of men's folly, that neither the rest of heaven nor the restlessness of hell can stir or move them; but they roll themselves up in their own sloth, and will hear nothing, nor lay any thing to heart, that may rouse or awaken them. Hath not God often called upon them by his ministers; "Sinners, sinners, awake: bestir yourselves: hell-fire is kindling about you: God is ready to open his mouth, to pronounce sentence against you: Satan is ready to lay hold of you, and to drag you to be tormented?" One would think such warnings as these are, should awaken the dead over which you sit were they not in their final state: and yet, with you, whose souls are yet in their bodies, but know not how soon they may be in hell, who among you are moved with all that hath been said or can be said of this matter? Nay, are you not like sleepy men when jogged, ready to grow pettish and to quarrel with us? "Why do you molest us? Why do you envy us our rest? Why do you disturb our peace, and will not let us alone?" Shall I say to you now, as once our Saviour said to his disciples: Mat. xxvi. 45; "Sleep on, and take your rest:" sleep on, and nod yourselves into destruction: sleep on, and never wake more till the flames of hell awaken you? Truly, we come not to disturb your rest: but we come to inform and guide you to a better rest, than what you can find here, even an eternal rest; a rest with him, that is immortal; a rest with him, who alone is unchangeable. And is not this rest worth a little pains and struggling to obtain? Do you think you are always to believe and to repent always to obey and mortify your corruptions? You cannot think

so, unless you think you are always to live in this world. No: a rest remains for the people of God, after a few short days be gone. It is not, therefore, your ease, that you seek, when you will not work: no: it is rather your pain and eternal torment, which shall certainly then be given unto all slothful persons, when the industrious and painful Christian, that labors and works for salvation, shall be admitted into the eternal rest after which he is aspiring, and hath already embraced in his hope and faith.

(4) As, in heaven, there is an eternal rest; so also, in heaven, there is an eternal work to be done.

And therefore you should inure yourselves to that work, while you are here upon earth. If happiness, according to the philosopher's notion, consists in activity; then in heaven, where there is the most perfect happiness, there must needs be the most perfect activity. And, therefore, whatever hath been spoken of rest that remains, yet you are not so to conceive of it, as possibly some gross enough are apt to wish and fancy to themselves, as if in heaven the blessed were inactive and enjoyed there only a long vacation, and only stretched themselves on that flowery bank, and so void of cares and fears lulled away an eternity: no; these are too low and brutish apprehensions for the glory ofthat place. That rest, that is there to be expected and enjoyed, is operative, working rest: it is both rest and exercise, at once; and, therefore, it is a true paradox, though the saints in heaven rest from their labors, yet they never rest from their working: continually are they blessing and praising God; ascribing glory, and honor, and power to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb forevermore: always are they beholding, admiring, and adoring God, and burning in love to each other, and mutually rejoicing in God and in one another. And this is the work of that eternal rest; a work never to be intermitted, nor to cease.

And, therefore, it is worth our observing, that both those places, that do chiefly speak of the future rest of the people of God, do also intimate a work in that rest.

So the Apostle to the Hebrews tells us, "There remaineth a rest for the people of God:" Heb. iv. 9. The word is, "There remaineth a *Sabbath* for the people of God." Look how you are to be employed on a Sabbath: such shall be your employment in your eternal rest. Is it not your work upon a Sabbath-day, to raise your thoughts and affections to heaven, to fix and terminate them upon God, to maintain communion with him, to admire him in all his works both of grace and providence, to stir up your own hearts,

and to quicken the hearts of others to praise and adore him? Why this shall be the work of your eternal Sabbath. And, when you are at any time lifted up to a more than ordinary spirituality in these things, then may you give some guess what your work shall be in heaven, and what the frame of your hearts shall be in your eternal rest.

And so that other place, in the Revelation: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.....for they rest from their labors; and their works do follow them:" Rev. xiv. 13; which may be meant, not only of the reward of their works, that they shall then receive; but of the works themselves, that here they performed on earth: these shall follow them, and enter into heaven with them; and, as they were done by them weakly and imperfectly here, so there the very same works shall be done by them with absolute and consummate perfection: all those works, I mean, that, for the matter and substance of them, do not imply a sinful state and condition.

Now, then, since you must be employed in such a work as this is to eternity, why do you not accustom yourselves to it while you are here? The Apostle writing to the Colossians, blesseth God, who had made them "meet to be made partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:" Col. i. 12. Were it a meet thing, that those, who spend their whole time in sin, should be abruptly snatched up into heaven, to spend an eternity there in holiness? And therefore God accustoms those, whom he saves in an ordinary way and manner, to work those works here on earth, that they are to be employed in hereafter in heaven. Here they are apprentices, as it were; that they may learn the trade of holiness: that, when that time comes, they may become fit citizens of the New Jerusalem. Here, God is trying their eyes with more qualified and allayed discoveries of himself: that, when they come to view him face to face, they may be able to bear the exceeding brightness of his glory. And, therefore, though you profess heaven to be your country, and that you are "strangers and pilgrims on the earth;" yet, say not with the captive Jews, "How shall we sing the song of Sion in a strange land?" Ps. cxxxvii. 4. Yes: you must accustom yourselves to that song: you must mold and warble it here on earth: that you may be perfect in it, when you come to join with saints and angels in their eternal hallelujahs. You must try your eyes, by seeing God; and your voices, by singing that song, which you must continually sing in heaven. And, were it only for this disposing and fitting yourselves for the work of heaven, this were motive enough to persuade to begin it now.

(5) Another encouraging consideration, to persuade you to work out your own salvation, is this: as your work is great, so the helps and assistances, that God gives for the performance of this work, are many.

So that your work is not greater than your aids: nor is it more difficult, than they are potent. And, therefore, though you are weak in yourselves; and so weak, that, were you left to your own strength, you would faint in the most easy service; yea, the weight but of one holy thought would sink you, for "we are not sufficient," says the Apostle, as "of ourselves to think any" good "thing:" yet, when we consider these mighty auxiliaries, that are afforded and promised; as comfort when we droop, support when we are weak, that we shall rise when we fall, recruits when we are worsted, omnipotence to supply our impotence, all-sufficiency to make up our defects: when we consider these things, then may we triumphantly say, with the Apostle, "When we are weak, then are we strong:" and though of ourselves we are nothing, and therefore can do nothing; yet, through these mighty assistances, we are able to do all things.

I shall rank these auxiliary forces into two bands. Some are external: others are internal.

[1] External helps are various. I shall only instance in three.

1st. You have the exciting *examples* of others, who have already happily gone through this work.

You are not commanded that, which never yet was imposed upon any of the sons of men; nor that, which whoever undertook, he failed in the performance, and sunk under the burden of it. No: there are hundreds and thousands gone before you, from whom God required as much as he doth from you; and these have demonstrated, that the work is possible, and the reward certain. And, therefore, as Israel followed the cloud for their conduct into the land of Canaan: so may you be led into a land of better promise, by "a cloud of witnesses," of those, who have already passed through the same faith, patience, and obedience, wherein you are to follow them.

It is superstition heightened to idolatry, to make use of the departed saints, as substituted mediators and under-advocates with Christ, that Christ may be our advocate with God the Father. What their present prayers for us are we know not: but this we are certain of, their past example ought to be propounded and improved by us for our encouragement in the ways of holiness and obedience. Hence the Apostle exhorts us, that we should be dili-

gent; not slothful: and he grounds it upon this, because in so doing, we should be "followers of them, who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises." In difficult and hazardous enterprises, every man is apt to stand still and see who will lead the way; and, according to the success of the first attempters, so either to be encouraged or dismayed. Now what says our Saviour, Matt. xi. 12? "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." You are not the forlorn hope: you are not the first assailants: no; whole armies of saints have, in former ages, stormed heaven: they have heretofore planted strong batteries against it, and made wide breaches in it: they have heretofore entered and taken possession; and still the passage is as open for you, and the conquest as easy as for them; and you may see them beckoning out of heaven to you, and hear them calling to you, "Fellow-soldiers, bend your force hither. There is your labor: here is your rest. There are your enemies; here are your crown and victory. Believe it, there are no more dangers for you to pass through, no more difficulties for you to meet with, than what we have passed through; yea, and passed with so much safety, as that not so much as one soul of us miscarried, not a soul left dead on the place: we struggled against the same corruptions, that you do, and overcame them; against the same temptations, and baffled them; against the same devils, and routed them; against the same flatteries and oppositions of a base world, and despised them. Believe it, upon our experience, all these things are but scare-crows set in the ways of obedience, on purpose to affright you; but there is no danger at all in them, unless you fear them." This they tell you, with one consent.

And, therefore, if examples are any encouragement, as indeed they are almost the greatest; if imitation hath any force to obedience, as too often we find it hath great force to sin; why should we not hereby quicken ourselves? Why do you not arise, and press upon the footsteps of them, who have gone before you, and showed you that the way is both certain and passable?

Are you called to exercise self-denial? Abraham looks down from heaven upon you, and tells you that he was ready to sacrifice his beloved Isaac. Are you afraid of the scoffs and jeers of a fleering world? Noah builded an ark: Moses relinquished the honors of Pharaoh's court; and met with as many persecutions and afflictions, and underwent as many taunts and flouts, as you are like to do. Are you called to lay down your lives for the testimony of Jesus and a good conscience? Stephen tells you a storm of stones

fell upon him, and broke open the prison, and set the prisoner free: his soul escaped: it broke out of the cage; and, as a bird, took wing, and flew to heaven. Are you assaulted with temptations? St. Paul looks down, and tells you that he had much stronger temptations than you have, and yet he got safe to heaven.

Yea, our great master and pattern, Jesus Christ, wrought out all obedience. And what were the motives, that put him upon this mighty undertaking? It was not for his own salvation and happiness, but it was for ours. Nay, the Scripture goes yet lower, it was, to leave "us an example, that we should follow his steps:" 1 Pet. ii. 21. Now shall Christ do all this, not for himself, but for us, and shall we sit still and do nothing for ourselves? Shall Christ take so much pains to set us an example, and shall not we follow that example; we who have so great a happiness to work for, and so great a pattern to work by? Shall we be slothful in procuring our own good, since Christ was so laborious and expensive, not in procuring good to himself, but in procuring good for others? Methinks, these things should add some spurs to our endeavors; and excite us to follow the examples of those, that are gone before us: yea, and to leave an example unto them, that are to come after us: and, though we do come after the examples of others, who are gone before us: yet the consideration of their examples, who have gone through this work, may excite us not to come behind them in any good work.

2dly. God holds out to us the *light of his gospel-truth and ordinances,* whereby to help us in our work.

What Christ saith of himself is applicable unto all: We "must work the works of God, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work:" John ix. 4. You are not shut up in darkness: you are not muffled up in the clouds of error and ignorance; or, if you are, it is not because you have not light shining about you, but because you shut it out when it is breaking in upon you. It is not a double labor, that is put upon you; first to find out your duty, and then to perform it: no; the light shines about you: and, unless you will seal up your eyes against it, it is impossible but that it will sometimes flash in upon you, and discover both what you have misdone and what you ought to do. The Mahometans have a tradition among them, that Moses's law and Christ's gospel were written, at first, with ink made of pure light: this conceit of theirs, though it be fond and ridiculous, yet carries a mystic truth in it: the Scripture is as plain for matter of duty, as if it had been written with a sunbeam: ordinances are dispensed freely and powerfully:

so great the throng of teachers, and such the variety of gospel administrations, that men must take almost as much pains to keep themselves ignorant of their duty, as would suffice to perform their duty. And wherefore think you is all this glorious light given you? Is it not that you may work by it? Doth a master light up a torch or candle, only that his servants may play about it? And wherefore doth God light up the sun of truth in the firmament of his Church? Is it, only that you should dally and trifle with it? No: it shines, that you may work by it. And, truly, work by it you do: but, alas! how many do work the works of darkness, by the glorious light of truth! how many have light enough, to see that they are notoriously wicked and profane swearers, drunkards, despisers of ordinances, revilers at religion and the professors of it, enemies to what is sober and sacred in Christianity! This light they have flashing in their faces, from the clear evidence of the word of God; and yet, still, they continue to work the works of darkness. What shall I say to such as these are? Truly, I can say nothing worse to them, than what their own consciences already thunder against them; for they are self-condemned persons. But, truly, this complaint may too justly be taken up against all, that do not walk worthy of the light vouchsafed to them: their sins are revealed clearly: and duties are revealed as clearly, as the Scripture can possibly express them; and yet they live in a gross neglect of them. Believe it, this light will not always shine to be gazed at only: the day is drawing to an end: the night is hastening upon us; the darkness of the night of death, and the darker night of judgment: and, oh! that then it may not be the condemnation of any of us, "That light is come into the world," but we "loved darkness" and the works of darkness better "than light, because" our "deeds were evil." John iii. 19.

3dly. God hath, to this end, set apart his *ministers*, that they might be helpers to you in this great work of working out your salvation.

And therefore they are called, "Helpers of your faith and joy:" 2 Cor. i. 24, they are said to "watch for your souls, as they that must give an account." Heb. xiii. 17: they are said to be co-workers with Jesus Christ: yea, they are said to save your souls: Jude 23. Ministers are set in the Church, to admonish with all meekness, to beseech with all earnestness, to rebuke with all authority. Yea, and we have done it: have we not called upon you, "Sinners, sinners, why will you die? the way, wherein you now walk, leads down to the chambers of death and destruction: the

wages of that work, which you are now doing, is shame, death, and hell." Have we not thus often called upon you? yes, so often have we thundered terrors in men's ears, that they now disregard them out of custom; and, when we speak of sin, and death, and hell, and judgment to come, men think we are fallen into a common-place, and we must talk dreadfully to keep in our road: these are the apprehensions which men have of the great and fearful denunciations, that are daily discharged in their ears by the ministers of the gospel. And have we not also displayed Jesus Christ in all his excellencies, so far forth as his infinite excellencies can be displayed with a few short-breathed words? Have we not set forth holiness in its beauty and luster; and done as much as we could do, to reconcile you to the ways of obedience, and to remove the unjust prejudices that men have taken up against them? What could we have done more than we have done, to inform men's judgments, to sanctify their consciences, to answer all their doubts, to allay their fears, to supply them with quickening considerations to duty and with deterring considerations from sin? We appeal to yourselves. And yet we speak not this, to ingratiate or to commend ourselves: we profess that we care not much for the good opinion of any man in the world, farther than it may be of some advantage to do your souls good. But do you think God expects not some great thing from you? Give me leave to deal truly and faithfully with you. If your works do not, in some measure, answer the labors of God's servants, that have many years followed you, with line upon line and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, still warning and entreating with all bowels of tenderness, alluring you to pity your own souls, and to save yourselves from that wrath and vengeance that shall shortly overcome the disobedient world; they, who have thus exhorted you, believe it, shall, within a while, be witnesses against you. Since, then, you are daily called upon and warned to flee from wrath to come; since you have such clear convictions of your duty, as a bribed conscience can hardly evade; since you have such abundance of examples of others, who have gone before you, and have done what God requires of you; why will not you be hereby persuaded and encouraged to work? These things, you must acknowledge, are great helps to further your salvation: and believe it, they will prove dreadful aggravations of your condemnation, if they do not prevail with you.

But these are only outward helps.

[2] There are other helps; and they are inward, and of far greater force and efficacy: of which I shall name two.

1st. The *dictates of your own consciences:* they are still prompting and exciting you to work.

Conscience is God's deputy and vicegerent in the soul, that rules and governs in his name and by his authority. Of all the faculties in man, this was the least corrupted by his fall: though the will be wholly corrupted and perverse, that it will not obey the commands of conscience; yet conscience still continues the performance of its office: still, it informs, and urges, and threatens, and torments; and thus may you see it busily working, even in those that never had the law of God to direct conscience: "The Gentiles," says the Apostle to the Romans, "which have not the law, do by nature," that is by natural conscience," the things contained in the Law.....their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts, in the mean while accusing and excusing one another;" Rom. ii. 14, 15: and, because they had not the law, therefore conscience in them was like an officer walking in the dark, apprehending the innocent and letting the guilty escape. But, yet, this was from the beginning so deeply implanted in the heart of man, that something must be done and avoided to obtain happiness which could never yet be obliterated. Though our knowledge of what is duty and what is sin be in a great part defaced; yet this knowledge the Scripture doth abundantly supply to us, and give conscience a perfect draught of all the duties that God requires, and bids it be overseer and look that the work be done. Now is it not a great help, when you have somewhat within you, that stands for and takes part with what is good, and what is your duty? Conscience secretly bids you beware of such sins, that will bring ruin, destruction, and vengeance upon you; and perform such and such duties: "Pray, hear, meditate, and be more fervent and affectionate in all your services: this is the way that tends to life and happiness." Thus conscience daily and hourly is following you, with counsels and chidings; and, with threatenings, denouncing wrath and vengeance against you: and, though it speaketh these things with so low a voice, that others, though they lay their ears to your soul, cannot hear it; yet in your ears, it speaks as loud as thunder, and no less terrible. It is in vain to wound it: it is in vain to stop its mouth; for that will but make it break out with the more violence and outrage: nothing can appease it, but duty and work. Why should you not, then, since you have that within you that stands for and prompts you to work, why should

you not as well follow and obey the dictates and commands of your consciences that prompt you to work and duty, as obey the propensities of your sensual part to the contrary?

2dly. *God himself helps us, by working all our works in us and for us;* by working in us the will to work, and by working for us the work when we have willed.

And, therefore, while there is no part of our work too hard for God, there should be no part of it too hard and difficult for us. Christ tells us that his burden is not heavy; yet, were it heavy, we might well undergo it, since he himself helps us to bear it. The frequent experience of every child of God doth abundantly confirm this. Did you never begin a duty, with your hearts listless and dead, with affections cold and flat, with thoughts very wandering and distracting; so that, at the very entrance of it, you concluded you should never make good work of it, you should never bring the duty to a good issue? and, yet, have you not, in the midst of these your distempers, found a mighty assistance and influence shining down from heaven into your hearts, filling them with holy and divine affections, transporting them beyond all that deadness that did oppress them, enlarging them with sweet and heavenly enlargements; so that no duties were ended with more comfort and revivings, than those, that were begun with such dead hearts and cold affections? Have you not often found it so? And what is this, but a sensible feeling of God's working in you? so that, in the same performance, you see your own weakness when you are left to yourselves, and you see the power of God's assistance, when he comes in to help you; and there is no duty, but this divine assistance may be hoped for and expected by you to enable you in the performance of it. Are you to do? God works in you the will and the deed. Are you to suffer? When you pass through the fire and through the water, he will be with you: Isa. xliii. 2. "He shall deliver thee in six troubles; and, in seven there shall no evil touch thee:" Job v. 19. Are you to pray? His "Spirit maketh intercession for us:" Rom. viii. 26. God doth not, as the Scribes and Pharisees did, lay heavy burdens upon others and not touch them with the least of his fingers: no; he is pleased to become a co-worker with you: he begins, he carries on, and he also perfects whatever concerns your duty here, and your happiness hereafter. And is not this a mighty encouragement to obedience? Will you any longer delay, since God affords you such assistance as this? Why do you not presently attempt this work? "But," you will say, "how shall I know that God will assist me?" Put it to the

trial. Was it ever known, that God failed any, that resolutely ventured? Dispute not his concurrence; but believe; and, by looking for it and depending upon it, you engage God to help you. It was the consideration of the all-sufficient assistance of God, that made one of the ancients cry out, *Da, Domine, quod jubes; et jube quod vis:* "Give, Lord, what thou commandest; and then command what thou wilt."

(6) Consider for your encouragement, that it is not so much the absolute and legal perfection of the work, as the perfection of the worker, that is the perfection of the heart, which is looked at and rewarded by God.

And is not this a great encouragement? There is a twofold perfection; the perfection of the work, and the perfection of the workman: the perfection of the work is, when the work doth so exactly and strictly answer the holy law of God, that there is no irregularity in it: the perfection of the workman is nothing but inward sincerity, the uprightness of the heart towards God; which may be, where there are many imperfections and defects intermingled. If God should accept and reward no work but what is absolutely perfect in respect of the law, this would be such a saddening discouragement, that it would take off the wheels of all endeavors; for all our obedience falls far short of legal perfection in this life. We ourselves are conscious of many failings and imperfections in our best services, and God knows far more; and, since we can do nothing without infirmities, who would venture to do any thing, upon the account of those infirmities, lest God should cast back all again as dung into our faces? No; but we do not stand upon such terms as these with our God: it is not so much what our works are, as what our heart is, that God looks at and will reward. Yet know, also, lest any man should too soon lay hold on this; if our hearts are perfect and sincere, we shall endeavor to the utmost of our power, that our works may be perfect according to the strictness of the law. I speak not this, therefore, to encourage ignorant sottish sinners, who, though they live in a constant course of sin and neglect of duty, yet soothe themselves with this, that God knows their hearts are good, sincere, and upright: let me cut off the foolish hopes of these men in a word: it is impossible that the heart should be sincere, where there is the allowance and liking of any one sin in the life. But I speak what I have said, to those, who, upon the sight and sense of their many failings, of the deadness and untowardness of their hearts, of their averseness and indisposition, of their wanderings and formality in the performance

of what is holy and good, are ready to be dejected and discouraged, and to give over doing any thing, because they can do nothing well: let such know, that though their works have not this legal perfection, yet if they do proceed from a sincere, upright, perfect heart, they shall be accepted and rewarded by God. Hezekiah had his failings, and the prophet sharply reproves him for his pride, making a glorious and boasting ostentation of his treasure to the king of Babylon; yet he prays and appeals to God, "Remember now, O Lord.....how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart:" Isa. xxxviii. 3. There may, therefore, be a perfect heart, where there are imperfect works: and, if you can make this plea, let me tell you, the perfection of your hearts will swallow up the imperfections of your works, so that they shall never come up in remembrance against you before God.

(7) Consider, for your encouragement, that, though your work be great, yet the success of it is certain.

The greatest check to industry, is fear of disappointment; from which you have no security, while you labor for any thing besides your own salvation. All worldly affairs are moved by such invisible wires and turned upon such small pins, that, if the finger of Providence displace but one of them, the whole fabric of our design is thereby disordered and our hopes defeated: and God, sometimes, delights to frustrate men's attempts about worldly concernments; "Is it not of the Lord of Hosts," says the prophet, "that the people shall labor in the very fire, and that the people shall weary themselves for very vanity?" Hab. ii. 13. To "labor in the fire" signifies two things: first, great pains; secondly, great disappointment: they work in the midst of scorching flames; and, what they do produce with so much anguish, they enjoy not, but it consumes between their fingers. When men have weaved a curious web of earthly contrivances, and think to wrap up themselves therein and to keep themselves warm, God breathes secret flames into it, that singe it: so that it can no more hold together, than so much tinder. And wherefore doth God blast men's endeavors; but that, seeing the vanity of all their labor under the sun, how wavering, how uncertain, and how unsuccessful things are, how means run one way and the end another, they might hereby be induced to turn their labors into another channel, and to work for their souls and for eternal happiness and salvation; that are as far above the reach of disappointment, as they are far above the rate of earthly concernments? "Mine elect," says God, "shall long enjoy the work of their hands:" Isa. lxv. 22: they shall not labor

in vain. And this is the great argument urged by the Apostle upon the Corinthians: "Be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord?" And why so industrious and constant? Knowing this, says he "that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Cor. xv. 58.

Two things there are, that make a labor to be in vain.

When it doth not accomplish its end.

When that end, which it doth accomplish, is not worth the cost and pains.

Now, in neither of these respects, is your labor in vain. For,

[1] It shall not fail to accomplish the end to which it is ordained; and that is, eternal salvation.

Three things there are, that make men come short in the accomplishment of an end propounded.

When men propound to themselves ends, that are in themselves simply impossible.

When, though the end be possible, yet the means, that are used, are unfit and improbable.

When, though the means are rightly suited to the attainment of the end, yet we do not persevere in the use of them.

Now, in none of these ways, shall a laborious Christian fail of his end. For,

1st. The end, that you work for, is not in itself simply *impossible.*

Should you propound to yourselves to become angels, should you strive to sublimate yourselves into spiritual essences, your attempts herein were all but vain, because it is impossible you should ever be refined into angels: but, if your end be to be like angels, to be equal to angels, this is possible and may be attained: "When they shall rise from the dead.....they are as the angels which are in heaven:" Mark xii. 25; which another Evangelist renders, they "are equal unto the angels:" Luke xx. 36. If, in this life, you propose to yourselves a state of perfection and freedom both from sin and sorrow, a state of consummate bliss and happiness, this end is impossible: but, if you make it your end to enjoy such a state as this hereafter, this is attainable and labor may achieve it. Yea, aim at what degree of glory you please, next below God and Christ, be it as high as cherubim and seraphim, I cannot say that you think of an impossibility: your labor may raise you to such a pitch and advance you to such glory, as shall dazzle the sun in its brightness. It is true, there was once a time, when salvation might well be reckoned among those things that were impossible; and that was, in that sad interval between the

fall and the promise of Christ, when all mankind lay in the shadow and in the valley of death; under the breach, and yet under the bond of the covenant of works; when it had, indeed, been in vain, so much as once to have thought of happiness, or to have labored for it. But, since Christ's undertaking, we, who were once "without hope," have now obtained "good hope through grace:" the partition-wall, that then we could neither climb over nor break through, is now taken away: the gate of heaven is now set open; and, with striving, we may enter, for our Saviour Jesus Christ "hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." And, therefore, though it may seem an impossibility to dejected and despairing souls, that ever such vile wretches should receive so great a dignity; that those, who are sunk so low in misery, should ever be raised to happiness; that those, who are so laden with sin and iniquity, should ever feel the weight of mercy and eternal glory; that those, whose best works deserve the lowest hell, should, though not *for*, yet *upon* the performance of those works, obtain the highest heavens: though this may seem to be an impossibility, yet, believe it, while you think of any glory lower than the glory of the Godhead, you think of nothing above a possibility and the reach of industry. None of you are excluded from a possibility of being saved. The covenant of grace runs in most large and comprehensive terms: "Whosoever believeth shall" obtain "eternal life." The death of Christ and his blood is a most sovereign medicine, applicable, not only to all maladies, but to all men, if they will believe. Though it is true, that none shall be saved but the elect; yet is it true also, that a possibility of salvation extends farther than election. Election gives the infallibility of salvation, as reprobation doth the infallibility of damnation: but, yet, as there is a possibility for those, that shall infallibly be saved, to perish if they do not believe; so is it possible for those, that shall infallibly perish, to be saved if they will believe.

The possibility of salvation, therefore, stands, not upon election, but upon two other grounds.

(1st) The meritorious and all-sufficient procurement of Christ.

Whereby he hath procured salvation for all the world, and for all in the world, upon condition of their faith; for that must still be taken in: for, were it not so, how could we preach remission of sins in his name to every creature, were not his death applicable to all? Then, though some should believe, yet, for want of a sacrifice offered up and a price paid down for them, they should not

be saved, though they should believe. How then is it, that we seriously call all men to repent and believe, that their sins may be pardoned and their souls saved? Certainly, unless the death of Chr'st hath procured salvation for all men upon condition of faith and repentance, such calls would be false in us, and vain to them: for so, we should promise salvation upon believing, to those, to whom, though they should believe, salvation should be denied, because they want a covenant made with them, and a surety to undertake for them. Therefore, I say, Christ's procurement is general so far, that whoever believes shall receive the benefit of his death.

(2dly) As the death of Christ is applicable to all for salvation if they believe, so faith, that alone applies this death, is attainable by you all, if you be not wanting to yourselves.

None of you are under an impossibility of believing; and, therefore, not under an impossibility of salvation. Though it be certain, that some shall infallibly persevere in infidelity; yet there is no one, that hears the sound of the Gospel and the outward call of God in his word, but may believe and obey, if he be not wanting to himself. Neither is this doctrine Arminianism; nor is it prejudicial to the efficacious grace of God, whereby the will is powerfully swayed to faith and obedience: for the converting grace of God is not given to make men capable to believe and to be converted, but it is given to make them actually believing and actually converting. The most wicked man that is, without the converting grace of God, is capable to be converted even in his state of unregeneracy; and converting grace gives not any new power to enable us to be converted, but it gives us an actual conversion. Some shall never believe, and why? not because they are under an impossibility, but because they will not believe: it is not because they cannot, but because they will not; unless we would so gratify their sloth, as to call their obstinacy an impossibility. It is true they are obstinate, and that obstinacy can never be cured without efficacious grace; but yet that obstinacy is not properly called an impossibility.

Since, then, salvation is a thing possible, why do you not labor for it, that your souls may be eternally happy? Christ hath "the key of David," and "he openeth, and no man shutteth," and he hath opened the everlasting gate to you all, and bids you all enter and take possession. There stand no grim guards to keep out you, or you. You cannot complain that you are excluded by a for-

cible decree; no, you shut the doors upon yourselves, and refuse to enter.

And this is the first reason why salvation is not labor in vain, because the end is possible to be attained.

2dly. There are also *right means* made known to you, to obtain this end.

Jacob, in his dream, saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven: certainly, there is a Jacob's ladder reaching from earth to heaven, that is more than a dream: every round in it is either a grace or a duty. It is not hid from you, what grace you must act, what duties you must perform, that you may obtain happiness: these are direct and proper means to it; nay, not only means to it, but the initials and beginnings of it. The glimmering light of nature could discover, that there was a future happiness; but it could not discover to us the right means thither: it could not direct us to believe in a crucified Saviour: and, therefore, to write by this dim light of nature had been labor in vain. But, now, we know that the way of salvation is, by repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ: now, we know that holiness and obedience do as certainly lead to heaven, as sin and disobedience drag down to hell. And, therefore, while we continue believing and working, is there any fear? nay, is there any possibility of disappointment in our great end? It is as impossible, that faith and obedience should not lead unto glory; as it is, that faith should, or obedience should not, continue in glory. And, therefore, O soul, be confident of success. Hast thou any good evidences, that thy graces are genuine and true, though but weak; that thy duties are sincere, though but imperfect; and that thou dost work the works of God with a steady heart, though with a trembling hand? give this assurance one lift higher: and, as thou art already assured of the truth of thy grace, and of the sincerity of thy obedience; so, henceforth, be as much assured of thy future glory, as if it were no longer future, but now actually in thy present possession: thy dawning shall break forth into a most perfect day: the womb of thy morning twilight shall be delivered of a noon-tide brightness: thy spark shall become a sun: thy seed of grace shall sprout, till it be fit for transplantation into paradise, and there shall flower into glory.

"But," may a poor soul say, "though the means that I now use to obtain salvation be right, to effect it, if still persisted in; yet I fear, lest the many corruptions, temptations, and hardships, that I

meet with, may turn me off from following my work, defeat me of my end, and make all I have done as so much labor in vain: and, therefore, I could have this confidence and assurance that you speak of, did I not fear this, that I should desist in my work."

3dly. Would you have good security against this? Then, in the third place, the laborious Christian as he useth right means, so he *shall continue and persevere in the use of them*, till he hath wrought out his own salvation by them: and, therefore, he shall certainly accomplish his end; and his labor shall not be in vain.

It is true, if you desist from working, all, that you have hitherto done, will be in vain; your faith, in vain; your tears, in vain; your prayers, in vain; all, in vain: and, therefore, this should cause you to work with fear and trembling, lest the wiles of Satan and the deceitfulness of your own hearts should entice you from your work and cheat you of your reward: "Let us therefore fear," says the Apostle, "lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of us should seem to come short of it." Heb. iv. 1. Yet, as this may cause holy fear; so it may be matter of spiritual joy and rejoicing, that, notwithstanding the deadness of our hearts, the slackness of our hands, the many avocations from without, the many interruptions from within, yet none of us shall forsake our work till we have brought it to perfection: our obedience shall be crowned with perseverance, and our perseverance with glory and immortality: see, for this, that of the Apostle, "We are confident of this very thing, that he, which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:" Phil. i. 6.

Let, therefore, the mouth of calumny be forever stopped, that accuseth this comfortable doctrine, of the saints' perseverance through grace unto glory, of patronizing sloth and idleness. Some do fasten this viper upon it: Let Christians live as they list, though careless of good works, yea though continually employed in evil works, yet, being Christians, they need not fear that they shall fall short of glory. But, though we do affirm that every true Christian shall certainly inherit heaven and glory, yet we shake off this pernicious confidence: for he is no true Christian, who is not zealous and careful of good works, whose knowledge of his own estate doth not provoke him to "walk worthy of" that "vocation wherewith he is called," whose hope of heaven doth not enable him to purify himself and to perfect holiness in the fear of God. What a contradiction is it to say, we patronize sinful sloth in men, when we tell them, if they are true Christians, that they shall continue work-

ing! Is it sloth, to continue working? Or, do we encourage men to be idle, by assuring them, if they are Christians, they must and shall work? Yet this is the natural strain and tendency of our doctrine. What greater encouragement can you have to obedience, than this? If you will work, you shall not fail of your end; because the end itself is possible; because the means to it are direct and certain; and because, if you once begin to work, you shall most assuredly persevere till you have attained that end, even the salvation of your own souls?

And this is one reason, why your labor shall not be in vain.

[2] Your labor shall not be in vain, because this end shall fully answer, yea infinitely exceed, all that cost and pains which you are at in procuring it.

It is not so, in the things of this world. As to this, that of the Psalmist holds true; "Surely every man walketh in a vain show: surely they are disquieted in vain." Ps. xxxix. 6, though they do attain their end: and that, because that very end, that they grasp, is itself but vanity. But, can any man account heaven and happiness a vain thing? Is it not infinitely worth all, yea more than all, that thou canst do or suffer for it? Certainly, when you come to enjoy it, you will not think it a hard bargain, that it stood you in so many duties and difficulties before you came to the possession of it. No: if there could be any sorrow in that state of perfect joy, it would be, not that we have done so much; but that we have done no more: not that we have gone through so much anguish in repentance, or that we have sustained such great conflicts in self-denial and mortification; but that we waded no deeper in our own tears, nor deeper in the blood of our own lusts; that we have not more vexed and crossed our carnal self, and taken more pains in the ways of God. Could there be any sorrow in heaven, this would be the cause of it. But, certainly, a great part of our joy there, will be to reflect upon those duties and works of obedience, through which, though with much struggling and striving, we have attained unto that most blessed state.

And this is the last argument or motive, that I shall insist upon: work; for your labor shall not be in vain, you shall certainly accomplish your end; and this end shall abundantly recompense you for all your labor and pains.

To conclude, then, this head. You have, at large, seen what can be pleaded on the behalf of obedience. What is it now, that you can object against these things? Are they not true? Are

they not cogent? Your consciences, I know, tell you that they are so. Why, then, do they not prevail with you? Why sit you still, folding your arms in your bosoms? Sirs, I have not spoken to you fables or mysteries, that cannot be understood: but the truth, in all plainness: and, if you will not lay it to heart, believe it there is a day coming, when you shall too late know, that once you had a proffer of salvation, and you might have been happy for working for it. But, alas! this is the desperate folly of men: they do not prize salvation, while it is attainable: they never account their souls precious, till they are lost; yea, and lost, beyond all hope of recovery. I cannot tell how these many and weighty arguments, that have been propounded, may work with you: God and your own consciences know: but this I can tell, the devil can never bring such strong reasons, why you should destroy and damn yourselves, as have now been laid before you why you should work out your own salvation. And, if they do not prevail with you, truly there is nothing that you can plead for yourselves: you cannot plead, that you could not do these things; that objection hath been answered: you cannot plead, that there would no profit arise to you if you did them; for the reward hath been abundantly discovered to you: if you plead any thing, it must be because you will not do them; and that is the thing, that will condemn you. Therefore, if these things do not prevail with you; if you still continue obstinate, and, instead of working the works of God, you work the works of your father the devil; God acquits himself; your blood lies not upon him: you have been fairly warned and told of it: but your own destruction shall justly lie upon your own heads.

V. And thus, having done with the arguments to press you to this duty of working out your own salvation with fear and trembling; I now come to ANSWER SOME OBJECTIONS.

Object. i. It may possibly enter into the heart of some desperate sinner or other to say, "These indeed are strong arguments, that have been propounded for the enforcement of this duty of working out our salvation, upon those that expect salvation; but, for my part, I pretend not so high: let me but now enjoy the sins that I serve and the pleasures that I pursue; and, for the state of my soul hereafter, I shall commend it to the mercy of God. Had I true grace, I might be persuaded to attempt this hard work, with hopes of some good success: but I own myself to be a sinner, and you

tell me I cannot change my own heart, and without this change no salvation can be expected; why then should I disquiet myself in vain, by laboring for that, which I cannot accomplish? If I must perish, I will perish with as much ease and pleasure as I may. If I must go to hell, I may be as soon carried down thither in a flood of sins, as with a flood of tears. If God hath sentenced me to hell hereafter, why should I sentence myself to a hell here? And, therefore, if salvation and happiness be such points, I will give them over, and embrace more easy and obvious pleasures."

I know there is no pious heart, but shivereth with horror at such language as this, though it be but presented to it; and may, and does, think it rather the speech of devils, than men that are in a way of salvation. It is true, it is the speech of devils; but it is the speech of devils, in men's hearts. But, what! shall we leave these men to such desperate resolutions? Shall we suffer them thus to go down flaming to hell? Certainly, religion hath reason enough in it to convince such as these, if they will but show themselves to be rational men.

For, consider, thou, who wouldst rather perish, than make thy life a trouble to thee by obedience: God, under thy disobedience, may make thy life a trouble, yea a hell to thee, by his terrors. Thou thinkest the filthy garments of thy sin and pollution sit more easy and loose about thee, than the close garments of holiness and obedience will do: nay, but God can wrap and roll these filthy garments of thine in brimstone, and set them on fire about thine ears. Many men's consciences, indeed, are like iron, that hath lain for some time out of the fire, which you would not suspect to be hot, till you let some water fall upon it, and then it appears to be so by its noise and hissing: so, truly, their consciences seem cold and dead, and such as you might handle at your pleasure; but, when once God lets fall some drops of his wrath upon them, then they hiss, and boil, and fill the soul with smoke and smother. A hard heart is no security against a troubled conscience. It is with the hearts and consciences of wicked men, as it is with a sore in the body; which, it may be, is the hardest part in the body and yet the sorest also: the red flesh about the sore is hard, and yet full of pain and anguish: so is it, many times, with the hearts and consciences of wicked men; which, though they are exceeding hard, yet are full of pain and anguish. We read of Heman, that, whilst he suffered the terrors of God, he was distracted: Ps. lxxxviii. 15. And, David tells us,

"The sorrows of death compassed me about, and the pains of hell gat hold of me:" Ps. cxvi. 3. And, if the wrath of the Almighty be thus sore and terrible upon these holy men, whose hearts were sound towards God; how fretting and galling will it be upon the ulcerated consciences of sinners! No man hath his present contentment and delight in his own power, no more than he hath his own conscience in his own power; which will speak, yea and speak terrible things too, when the sinner hath done all he can to stifle it. Nay, let every sinner speak: How is it with you, after the madness and rage of your sin are over; are you not then haunted with direful thoughts of horror and amazement, that are, as it were, gnawing and devouring your hearts? And are these they, who are content to buy ease and quietness at so dear a rate, as the loss of their precious and immortal souls; and to be eternally tormented hereafter, besides their present pain and anguish after the commission of sin now, which if they feel not always yet frequently they do? But, if God should give them up to such hardness of heart, as to become altogether insensible and stupid while they continue in this world; yet what will this avail them? Will they not purchase their ease and pleasure very dearly; to lose their souls forever hereafter, and to suffer the pains of hell eternally? The devil hath put a horrid cheat upon these men: for they do not change their troubles and sorrows, but only the time of them: and, for a little fancied sensual ease and pleasure in this world, (which it may be they may enjoy, and it may be not; for, possibly, God may be so provoked by them, that he may suddenly cut them off in their sins: but, if not, it is but for a very little time that the pleasures of their sins and lusts will last, and then) an eternity of pain and torment shall be their portion. Sinners, be not therefore deceived: suffer not the devil to abuse you; and to impose his drudgery upon you, under the pretence of ease and quietness. If, therefore, it be only present contentment and satisfaction, that you seek; if you think that you shall perish, but yet you would perish the easiest way; that is not, believe it, by giving up yourselves to a way and course of sin, but in a way of duty and laborious working: in that only, can you find present contentment; and in that possibly, you may find eternal happiness.

OBJECT. ii. "But," may some say, "the works of God would be more pleasing to us, if we could but work them. But, first, we have no working principle: we are in a state of nature, and with-

out grace; so that we cannot work. And, secondly, we cannot implant this grace in ourselves."

To this I answer: Though you neither have grace, nor can work grace in yourselves, yet you can do much, yea very much, in order to salvation, by the mere strength of nature and the liberty of your own will. This is a consideration, that needs to be frequently pressed upon the consciences of wicked men: they often hear unto what a state of weakness sin hath reduced them, and that without grace they can do nothing that is pleasing unto God or advantageous to themselves; and, by this, they are put out of conceit of setting upon the work of God, and leave the salvation of their souls at all adventures.

Consider, therefore, Sinners, how much you may do toward your own salvation, from your own nature and free-will. And, here,

1. *The vilest sinner, even by the power of nature and his own free-will, may attain to the highest degree and pitch of preparation, that is usually wrought in the heart antecedently to or before true grace.*

Such are legal conviction and contrition, a sad sight of sin, and a deep sorrow for it, together with strong resolutions and purposes against it, with strong desires after grace and holiness, and the like. And the reason of this is, because all these things are short of grace: and, whatever is short of true grace, falls within the compass of nature and free-will, which is common unto all men; which, though it be indeed wounded and maimed, yet may make shift to go so far as this comes to. True grace is only the creation of the power of God, and not the production of nature or free-will: wherefore, after all this preparation is wrought, a sinner can no more work grace in himself, than he could before; yet he is now nearer to grace, and in a greater probability of it than he was before. And there is none but may go thus far, if they will but improve that power and ability that they have.

2. *There is no duty in religion, but the power of nature may carry a man out to the external performance thereof, and that with affection and enlargement also.*

Ahab humbles himself. Herod heard John Baptist gladly. And so, sinners can pray, hear, read, meditate, and discourse of the things of God: others have done so, formerly; and, therefore, they may and can do so, now. Indeed, heretofore, there were peculiar gifts bestowed upon wicked persons, immediately from God; as Balaam was made to prophesy of Christ, and the like: Numb. xxiv. 17. But these are now ceased: and all unregenerate persons

now, have the same power and faculties in them, one as well as another; and may be able to do, one as much as another, in the performance of spiritual duties, if they themselves will.

3. *There is no wicked man whatever, but may, by the mere power of nature, restrain himself from the commission of sin.*

I speak not of sins, collectively taken; for no man can so say his heart or life is clean and pure: but he may keep out of notorious and scandalous sins. There is no sinner, that hath given himself up to his lusts, but may, if he will, for the future live so inoffensively, that neither the world nor his own conscience may have much to accuse him of, besides common infirmities. Mark the reason of this: because wicked men commonly make choice of sin: this sin they will live in, and that sin they will not live in: the drunkard is not covetous, and the covetous man is not a drunkard; and so I may say of other sins. Now it is from the power of nature, that wicked men refrain from the commission of any one sin; and not from the power of grace: and, therefore, if one sinner hath power to keep from this sin, and another sinner hath power to keep from the commission of another, and a third from a third sin, then every sinner may, by the power of nature, keep from all those sins that any of those sinners do keep themselves from; because there is the same power in each sinner, to lay the same restraint upon this or that sin, that others keep from.

4. *There is no man, how great a sinner soever, but, if he will, he may with constancy, yea to the end and period of his life, continue thus in the performance of duties and in avoiding sins, by the power of nature only.*

For, if it be possible that men should do it at any time, then it is possible for them to do it continually. No more power is required to enable them this day, than was required the day past; nor no more power is required for the day to come, than was for this day now present: therefore, having strength to avoid them one time, they might also avoid them another time; yea, and continually persevere in so doing, if they would keep a daily constant watch against them.

5. *There is no man, but, through this perseverance and continuance, may attain to habitualness; and, thereby, to a facility and easiness, in the performance of duties, and in the avoiding of sins.*

When men are accustomed to a road and round of duties, it is a trouble to them to omit them: so, if men did but set themselves to their utmost to perform duties in a more hearty and cordial manner, those duties would become easy to them; and, if men would

but engage themselves perseveringly to oppose their corruptions, this would bring them to that pass, that it would be their delight to keep from sin and to perform duty. And to all this the power of nature would bring them.

Now, Sinners, you see what a large tenure you have. You are not staked down fast, that you can do nothing: no; it is much, yea very much, that you may do in order to your salvation.

But here, some may possibly say, "We hope that these words are not true:" for they would not be able to do so much as all this comes to, because they are willing to do nothing at all. But, let such know, that that, which will condemn them at the last day, will be, that they have not done what they might have done, in performing duties and in opposing sins, and therefore they willfully fall short of happiness and salvation.

OBJECT. iii. "But," may some say, "if we should put forth to our utmost the power of nature, what would that avail us? We cannot thereby work grace in ourselves; and, without grace, no salvation is to be had."

To this I answer: Consider, you do not know but, whilst you are thus doing what you can, God may come in and by his grace enable you to do what you cannot do. God is not wont to be wanting, in this particular, unto any. He is found of those, that seek him not; and, much more, will he be found of those, that seek him and inquire after him, though it be but by the weak endeavors of nature.

OBJECT. iv. "But," may some say, "hath God obliged himself to convert and save those, that do to the utmost that which nature enables them to do, in desiring salvation and in seeking to obtain it?"

To this I answer: God hath not bound himself, but usually he doth so. God is neither bound to give grace, upon the endeavors of nature; neither is he wont to deny it. Can you say, that ever you knew or heard of any careful, conscientious, industrious soul, that diligently and conscientiously exercised itself in performing duties and in avoiding sins, that was not at last truly converted and eternally saved? And why then should you doubt or think that

you shall be the first? Cast yourself, therefore, upon God; trusting to his rich and free grace; doing the utmost of your endeavors.

However, suppose the worst, that thou art never converted nor saved, which supposition is very dreadful and terrible; and, if thou art careful and conscientious to improve thy abilities to the utmost, it is altogether improbable; but, suppose the worst:

1. *Thou livest here, then, more according to the rule of nature and reason, than others do.*

For, when others wallow in sin, thou showest thyself to be more like a rational man: thou art sensible thou hast a soul of more worth, than to be lost for want of care and diligence. And, then,

2. *Thy pains and punishments, hereafter, shall be greatly mitigated.*

Possibly, thou mayest slight this: because, at best, it is damnation: yea, but consider, there are several degrees of torments in hell. Now thy workings and endeavors may free thee from many degrees of torment; and, therefore, they free thee from many hells: and is not this worth thy labor? Nay, and not only so, but it is very probable that you may altogether escape those torments, if you be conscientious in doing your utmost endeavors.

VI. And now, methinks, every one, that hath but reason to judge and a soul to save, must needs see so much strength and force in the arguments that have been propounded, that the next question should be, "What must we do, to work the works of God?" John vi. 28. In every trade and profession, there is some kind of mystery, that gives to them, that have attained to it, a quicker dispatch in their business than other men have. And so is it in the work and profession of a Christian: there is an art and mystery; and he, that is master of this, shall make good dispatch in his great work.

And, possibly, we may have some insight into it by these following DIRECTIONS.

Direction i. If you would work out your own salvation, then DIGEST AND DISPOSE YOUR WORK INTO A RIGHT ORDER AND METHOD.

Want of method breeds confusion; and makes that a tumult and a heap of business, that would otherwise become a trade in Christianity. One attainment makes way for and opens into another: and, to attempt any thing in Christianity by leaps and jumps as it were, is fruitless, unprofitable, and vain. No wise man will try to mount the highest round of a ladder at the first step. But, yet,

many such preposterous endeavors are found among men, in the working out of their salvation. In respect of doctrinals, St. Paul tells us, some built "hay and stubble" upon a foundation of gold: 1 Cor. iii. 12. But, in respect of practicals, it is frequent, that many men endeavor to build gold upon a foundation of hay and stubble. These men's buildings will soon totter, fall, and come to nothing but ruin, shame, and disappointment. Now the right disposal of your great work lies thus: first, you are to work from nature to grace; and, then, from grace unto the holy and spiritual performance of duty, by which grace is much confirmed and strengthened; and so, continuing in duty, to arrive at assurance; and, from this, the next step is salvation: from nature to grace, and from grace to duty. See this method laid down by the Apostle: Heb. xii. 28; "Let us," says he, "have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear:" this is the ladder of heaven, whose bottom step is below grace in nature, and whose utmost step is above it in absolute perfection and glory: first, there must be grace; before any duty can be performed acceptably unto God. But, most men pervert and disturb this method. And the ordinary way of disturbance is this: they are frequent in duties; but they perform them not, either for grace or from grace; neither that they may attain grace by them, nor that they may exercise grace in them: and yet, notwithstanding, these men think and hope to work out salvation by such duties as these; making a leap from duties to salvation; neglecting to obtain that grace, that can make their duties acceptable and saving: and, hence it is, that they make no quicker dispatch and riddance in their great work.

Now such attempts as these are

Discouraging and disheartening. And,

They are vain and fruitless.

1. They are *very discouraging.*

Duties never flow freely from the soul, where grace is not like a continual fountain to supply it. Job, speaking of the hypocrite, asks this question, "Will he delight himself in God? will he always call upon him?" Job xxvii. 10. No: he will not: it is not possible that he should do so: though, for a time, he may drive at a high rate, praying both with fervency and affection; yet will he soon decay and faint, because he hath no life of grace to carry him through duties: but he finds them to flow stubbornly from him; and, therefore, through weariness and discontent, at last he gives them over. The good works of graceless persons may be as flourishing as if indeed they were true saints; but they have not a

root to supply them: the root of the matter, as Job speaks, is not in them: and, therefore, they are soon nipped and fade away. It is simply impossible, that a person, without the life and power of grace, should persevere in a cordial, affectionate performance of good works: interest, credit, respect, and natural conscience, are wheels too weak for so great a burden: it is grace only, that can overbalance all outward discouragements; yea, and which is more, that alone can remove all inward also; this can make obedience sweet to a child of God, which to a wicked man must needs be irksome; and that, because he hath no relish therein. Mat. xvi. 23. "Thou savorest not the things that are of God:" this may be much more said of graceless persons, because they have not salt in them, for so grace is called, (Col. iv. 6,) that should make holy and heavenly things to be savory to them. What a torment is it, to be still chewing an unsavory prayer and an unsavory meditation! to hear and speak those words, that their ears cannot relish! "Must I always," says the sinner, "offer this force to myself? Must I still strain and pump for tears and sighs? Were holiness as easy to me as it is to some, no life would I choose sooner than that: but I am straitened and pinched up, and all good things come out of me like the evil spirit, which rends and tears me, and is a torture and anguish to my heart and bowels." And it is so, because, in the performance of them, there is a neglect of that grace, that should make duties become easy: and, therefore, such a one will shortly give over duties themselves, which he finds to be so troublesome: yea, and will also give over all hopes of attaining any good at all by them.

2. Such works are also, as to the obtaining of the last and main end, *vain and fruitless:* and that, upon two accounts.

(1) Because the acting of grace is the life and spirit of all our works; without which, they are all but carcasses and dead things, and only equivocally called good works, even as the picture of a man may be called a man.

"We are," says the Apostle, "his workmanship; created in Christ Jesus unto good works." As, after the first creation, God took a survey of all the works of his hands, and pronounced them all very good: so there is no work of ours, that God will pronounce to be a good work, but what is the effect of his creating power; that is, the product of his second creation: "created," says the Apostle, "unto good works:" Eph. ii. 10. Good works are no otherwise necessary to salvation, but as they are the exercises of grace, by which we express the life and likeness of God.

How should grace be seen and known but by works? First, God imprinted his own image upon our souls, in regeneration; and stamped us feature for feature, grace for grace, and glory for glory; for because this is hid and concealed, therefore are we to copy forth this image in a holy conversation, and to express every grace in some duty or work of obedience. As those, that we call falling stars, dart from heaven, and draw after them long trains of light; so God would have us to shoot up to heaven, but yet to leave a train of light behind us: our graces must shine always: we must go on in good works. And those good works are of no value or account with God, of which grace is not the end or principle. What says the Apostle? "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor.....and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing:" 1 Cor. xiii. 3. Can a man bestow all his goods upon the poor, and not be charitable? Indeed, the word that we translate *charity*, might, to avoid some mistakes, better have been translated *love;* but, however, we must take *charity* for a disposition to relieve the wants and necessities of others with respect of love to God and his image: if this good work be not from grace, through a principle of love to God and obedience to his command, it is but the empty shell and husk of a good work, and it avails a man nothing. Yea, further: if, after this, "I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing:" if my soul burn not as clear and bright in love, as my body in the flames, it availeth me nothing: I burn only what was dead before; and offer a carcase, instead of a sacrifice. There is no work or duty, how specious soever, that is of any profit to the soul, if that work or duty hath not the life and power of some grace or other expressed in it.

This, then, is the first ground, why works without grace are fruitless: because they are empty and lifeless. Grace is the life and spirit of good works.

(2) All works and duties whatever, without grace, leave the heart in the same estate of sin, and therefore the person in the same estate of wrath and condemnation, as before. For,

[1] All of them are not a sufficient expiation for the guilt of any one sin.

Should such men pray and sigh, till their breath were turned into a cloud, and covered the face of the whole sky; should they weep, till they drowned themselves in their own tears: yet, if all this could be supposed to be only the remorse of nature, and not true and godly sorrow, they would still be under the same state of condemnation as the most seared sinner in the world. The prophet

Micah tells of some, that bid very high for pardon and forgiveness, as if they were resolved to carry it at any rate whatever: "Wherewith," say they, "shall we come before the Lord, and bow ourselves before the most-high God? Shall we come before him with burnt-offerings, and with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, and with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall we give our first-born for our transgression, the fruit of our bodies for the sin of our souls?" Micah vi. 6, 7. What high rates are here bidden, and yet all this falls short! There is but one grace, and that is *faith*, that can give us a right and title to that righteousness which shall be a sufficient expiation and atonement for all our sins.

[2] All attainments and attempts, all endeavors and duties, without grace, can never mortify and subdue the power and dominion of any one lust or corruption.

Men may divert, and chain, and restrain their corruptions; and hedge in their lusts, so that they shall not break forth into any outrageous wickedness: but, yet, without grace, they can never subdue them; because it is grace alone, that can lay the axe to the root of this evil tree.

Notwithstanding, then, all that hath been said concerning the power of nature, what men may do thereby and how far they may go: yet here you see what impotence there is in nature, without grace; and what it cannot reach to perform.

But, this is not spoken, that, hereby, any should be discouraged from working; and, because some doubt of the truth of their graces, that therefore they should desist from a course of holiness and obedience: this were plainly to thwart the whole design of this subject. No: all, that hath been said, is, to persuade men not to rest satisfied in any work of obedience or religion, in which some grace is not breathed or exercised; nor to look upon them at all as inductive to salvation, as in themselves, but as in reference to true grace.

How many poor souls are there, who, because they run on in a round of duties, because they do something that they call good works, think that salvation is as surely their own, as if all the promises in the Scripture were sealed and delivered to them by God himself! And yet, poor creatures! they never examine or regard from what principle this their obedience flows: whether from a principle of grace; or from the old corrupt principle of nature, new vamped from some common operations of the Spirit. Believe it, this is not that obedience, that God requires, nor that

he will accept: an inward groan, if breathed by grace, is of more account with God, and will be more available to the soul, than the most pompous and specious services of unregenerate men. What is it to God, when you offer not only the blind and the lame, but the dead also? Is it not rather an abomination, than obedience? The Apostle tells us, "Without works, faith is dead:" James ii. 20; and it is as true, on the other side also, that works, without faith and other graces of the Spirit, are not only dead, but rotten and noisome. Every duty, which men perform in a graceless state and condition, God must needs loathe, and them for it; the "prayer" of the wicked is an "abomination" unto the Lord: Prov. xxviii. 9; it is as hateful unto God, as vapors, that ascend out of tombs from putrefied bodies, are unto us.

What, then! must such persons give up themselves to sin therefore? God forbid! No, rather let such think thus: "If our duties and our righteousness be so loathsome, what are our sins and iniquities?" Though every sinner be "dead in trespasses and sins," yet is it less offensive to have a dead carcass embalmed than to have it lie open. Still, therefore, continue working; but, in your working, first aim to obtain grace, before you aim at obtaining heaven and salvation: let it, at no time, content you, that such and such duties you have performed; but look what grace you have acted in them: what is there of God breathing in this prayer, that I now put up? How am I in hearing, in meditation, in discoursing of the things of God? Is my heart holy and spiritual? Are my affections pure and fervent? Are my graces active and vigorous? And, are they vigorous in this work of obedience? Else, to perform duties, and to neglect grace that alone can enable us to perform duties acceptably, is only to go to hell a little more cleanly.

DIRECTION ii. If you would work out your own salvation, as you must look to the actings of grace as well as to the performance of duties; so you must LABOR TO GROW AND INCREASE IN THOSE GRACES, THAT ARE MOST ACTIVE AND WORKING.

And they are two, the grace of faith, and the grace of love

To grow strong in these graces, is the most compendious way for a Christian to dispatch his great work. I may call them the two hands of a Christian: and he, that is most active in these, works out his salvation "with both hands earnestly."

1. *The actings of faith are of mighty advantage to the working out of our salvation.*

Two senses there are, in which salvation may be said to be wrought out.

In title: in actual possession and enjoyment.

Now faith is a working out of the one, and a compendious furtherance towards the working out of the other.

(1) Upon our believing, salvation is already wrought out for us, in right and title.

"He, that believeth, shall be saved:" here is the title. The great work is then done and finished, when once faith is wrought. And, therefore, when the Jews came to inquire of our Saviour, how they should do to "work the works of God:" John vi. 28, 29, our Lord tells them, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him, whom he hath sent." Nay, further, as a faith of adherence or acceptance gives a right and title to salvation; so a faith of full assurance is this salvation itself: for, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen:" Heb. xi. 1: in its justifying act, it gives a title to salvation: in its assuring act, it gives the substance of the thing itself: for it is much at one to a strong faith, to believe heaven, and to enjoy it.

(2) Faith doth compendiously further and promote the working out of our salvation, in actual possession.

And that, because faith is that grace, which draweth all that ability and strength from Christ, whereby a Christian is enabled to work. Faith is not only a grace of itself, but it is steward and purveyor for all other graces; and its office is to bring in provision for them, while they are working: and, therefore, as a man's faith grows either stronger or weaker, so his work goes on more or less vigorously. When other graces are in want, and cry "Give, give;" then faith betakes itself to Christ, and saith, "Lord, such a grace stands in need of so much strength to support it; and such a grace stands in need of so much support to act it: and I have nothing to give it myself; and therefore I come to fetch supplies from thee." And, certainly, this faith, that comes thus empty-handed unto Christ, never goes away empty-handed from Christ. What is it of which you complain? Is it, that the work stands at a stay, and you cannot make it go forward? Is it, that temptations are strong and violent; that duties are hard, irksome, and difficult? Why set faith on work to go to Christ, and there you may be sure to have supply; because faith is an omnipotent grace: "All things are possible to him, that believeth:" and that, because all things are possible to that God and to that Christ, on whom faith is acted. There is no grace, nor no supply, nor mercy

laid up in the Lord Jesus Christ, but it is all in the hands of a believer's faith; and he may take from thence whatsoever he needs, to supply the present wants and necessities of his soul.

2. *Another working grace is the fervent actings of love.*

Love is the great wheel of the soul, that sets all the rest a moving; and makes it like "the chariots of Ammi-nadib," Cant. vi. 12, to run swiftly towards its desired object. There is a mutual dependence between faith and love, in their working: love depends upon faith to strengthen it, and faith depends again upon love to act it. As we love not that, which we do not know: and our knowledge of God and of the things of eternity is by faith, not by vision: so those things, which we do know and which we do believe, yet if we love them not we shall never endeavor after them. The Apostle therefore tells us, that "faith worketh by love."

There is a threefold spiritual love required to expedite our great work.

A transcendent love of God.

A regular love of ourselves.

A complacent love for and delight in our work itself.

Now when the affections go out after these objects of love, this will much facilitate our great work.

(1) The love of God is a great help to our duty.

Our Saviour therefore urgeth obedience, upon this very account: "If ye love me, keep my commandments:" John xiv. 15. And, says the Apostle, "This is the love of God," that is, this is a certain sign, or it is the constant effect of our love to God, "that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous:" 1 John v. 3. They are not grievous, because they are His commandments, who is the love and joy of our souls.

Divine love always conforms itself to divine precepts: and that, for two reasons:

[1] Because this grace, as it desires the beatific union to God in glory, hereafter; for love is the desire of union: so, now, it causes an unspeakable union of will, and a supernatural sympathy of affection, betwixt God and the soul.

Which union cannot be a union of equality or entity, as is in the Persons of the Blessed Trinity: and, therefore, it is a union of subordination of a Christian's will to the will of God. Now what is this will of God? The Apostle tell us: "This is the will of God, even your sanctification:" 1 Thes. iv. 3. And the same Apostle tell us, in another place, "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before

ordained that we should walk.....in them:" Eph. ii. 10. And is this God's will, and shall it not be our work? Hath God ordained that we should walk therein, and shall we be averse from or slothful thereunto? How can we pretend that we love God, while we neglect the only thing which he requires from us, holiness and obedience? God wills our holiness, because there is no better thing that he can will, next unto himself: the image of God, next to himself, is the most excellent and chief good. Every thing, the nearer it approacheth unto God, the more desirable it becomes in itself: now that, which comes most near unto God, and advances the soul in some resemblance and similitude to him, is holiness and endeavors after obedience; whereby we become conformable unto God, and attain some faint shadows and essays of the divine perfections. The soul wills in order unto God's will. God wills holiness, because it is most desirable: and we must will our own holiness; because, if we love God as we pretend to do, our wills must be conformable to his holy will.

[2] Love to God is a help to duty, because it is in and by duty, that we enjoy the presence of God, and have communion and fellowship with him.

These are the lattices, through which God appears to the longing soul: and, though he many times vouchsafes but half smiles and little glances; yet, in these reserved communications, the soul finds so much sweetness, as engageth it to a constant performance of duties all its days. "Here," says the soul, "God was wont to walk in his sanctuary: here, have I heard his voice: here, have I seen his face: his Spirit hath here breathed upon me: his consolations have here refreshed me: and, therefore, here will I wait upon him as long as I live." "I remember well," says the soul, "when, in prayer and meditation, my heart hath been filled by him, poured out to him, and accepted with him. I remember when he filled me first with sighs, and then with songs; and both alike unutterable; and, therefore, I will keep to the performance of these duties, waiting for the further discoveries and manifestations of my God unto me."

(2) As love to God, so a regular self-love will much help and further our obedience and duty.

And then is self-love truly regular, when men love their own souls, as God loves them. Now God's love to the souls of men is such, that, though he wills "all men to be saved," yet he wills that none shall be saved, but "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:" and, whilst we love ourselves, if we ob-

serve the same method and order, this self-love is always commendable and necessary. Desires after eternal happiness and salvation are natural to that soul, that is truly conscious of its own immortality; and of its eternal, unalterable state and condition: and, when these desires are directed to future happiness through present holiness, then are they regular and become gracious. We are not so straitly limited by God's sovereignty over us, but, while we fix one eye upon our work, we may fix the other on our reward. God is not so strict in his prerogative over us, as to require service from us, from what we have already received from him: he is not as a cruel lord and master to say, "Obey me, though afterwards you perish: see to it, that you love and glorify me, though I eternally punish you:" though, considering that infinite distance we stand at from God, we could object nothing against the equity of his proceedings. No, but God hath so graciously twisted his glory and our duty together, that, while we promote the one, we do also promote the other; and, while we work for God, we do but work for ourselves. Now are there any, that need to be persuaded to love themselves? Is it not the great and general sin, that all men love and seek themselves? And do not men, by becoming self-lovers, become self-destroyers? They do: but it is because they seek themselves out of God's way, that they lose themselves forever. Religion and holiness are not such severe things, as to exclude self-love: nay, right self-love is that, which is nowhere to be found separate from true grace. Ministers call upon men to exercise self-denial and self-abhorrence; and this the foolish world mistake, as if they exhorted them to divorce themselves from themselves, to lay aside all respect and consideration of self, and to offer violence to the most common principles of self-preservation: no; would to God we all sought ourselves more earnestly and constantly than we do, and that we all knew wherein our greatest interest and concernment did lie! then should we not leave our great work undone; nor gratify the sloth of our corrupt humors, and the sinful propensities of our carnal part; nor should we think what we do for sin and Satan we do for ourselves: no; all this is to hate ourselves: and wicked men, at the last day, shall know, that they have been their own most bitter and most implacable enemies; that they would not be content with any thing less, than their own eternal ruin. A true Christian is the only selfish man in the world: all others are not self-lovers, but self-destroyers. What shall I say more than this? The Apostle asks, did ever any man hate his own flesh? Did ever any man delight to gash and burn, to rack

and torture himself? Truly I may ask the quite contrary: do almost any love their own spirits, their spiritual part, their souls? This, they wound and gash, by many a bloody sin: this, they burn and sear, by hardness and impenitence: this, they go about to torture and torment in hell forever. O, therefore, be persuaded, at length to take pity on yourselves: considering, that you are but destroying, while you think you are embracing yourselves; and, that that will be found but self-murder at last, which you now call self-love.

(3) A complacent love to and delight in your work, is a great furtherance of it.

A wicked man serves God grudgingly: he murmurs at duties, and looks upon them only as tasks and burdens; thinking every thing which he doth for God too much, too heavy and weighty: the commands of God are all of them hard sayings and grievous impositions, that he cannot bear. He could believe Christ sooner in any thing, than when he tells him, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light:" Mat. xi. 30: here he cannot believe Christ. "Thus much time," saith the slothful sinner, "must I spend in prayer: and there must I humble myself to God, whom I hate; and confess before him those sins, that I love; and beg that grace, that I have slighted. So much time, must I spend in reading the law, that I never mean to observe; perusing over only the sentence of my condemnation. And, so often, must I fix and dwell upon holy and spiritual thoughts; which never, at any time, darted into or passed intransiently, but they did discompose me, and leave a damp and sadness upon my spirit behind them." And, therefore, because there is not a holy complacency and delight in the service of God, all such men's endeavors are both faint, inconstant, and languishing while they are about them, and seldom do they resume them again. But a true Christian works with abundance of delight and cheerfulness in the service of God: in every duty, his soul is filled full of holy affections, by which it soars to heaven: duties are meat and drink to him, spiritual manna, in which he takes more satisfaction and contentment than wicked men do in their sins; and therefore he performs these duties so earnestly, because he doth it with complacency: all that he repines at, is, that natural necessity, sinful weakness and infirmities and worldly employments, do purloin so much of his time from this great work. Now when once the heart is brought to such a frame and temper as this, thus to delight in obedience and in the work and service of God, then will this working for salvation go on with power.

Direction iii. Another direction is that in the text: WORK FOR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

A trembling hand best performs a Christian's work.

Now this fear is not a fear of distrust or despondency; for that is so contrary to this duty of working for salvation, as that it stupefies and benumbs all endeavors, and is a great enemy to the performance of this duty. But,

1. It is *a fear of solicitude and carefulness;* as it stands opposed to carnal security, and that presumption, that is the common and ordinary destruction of most men.

This holy fear is the best preservative of true grace. The Apostle therefore tells us, "Thou standest by faith: be not high-minded, but fear:" implying, that they would not stand long, though they stood by faith, unless they were upheld with godly fear; and the reason is, because it is the property of fear to foresee and forecast dangers, and to put the soul in a posture of defence and security before they approach. For, as the wise man tells us, the "prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished:" Prov. xxii. 3. They are rash and confident in their undertakings, and so they pass on and are punished. Fear makes a Christian circumspect and thoughtful, how he may keep from miscarriages in the performance of his great work. "If God call me to such a duty, how shall I perform it? If, to bear such a cross and affliction, how shall I glorify him under it? If, to conflict with such temptations, how shall I resist and overcome them? Yea, how shall I do to break through all difficulties, duties, and oppositions, that I, who am but a weak and feeble Christian, may meet withal? And how shall I do to bear up?" And, thus, pondering what may be his duty, and forecasting what duties God may call him unto, he is enabled to do what was his duty at present, and what also may by providence hereafter become his duty. Nothing overtakes such a man, unexpected; nor doth any thing surprise him, unprovided for it. And thus a careful fear enables him in the performance of his great work.

2. *A fear of humility and holy reverence of God,* conduceth much to the working out of our salvation: and that, in three particulars.

(1) It much helps us in our great work, to fear God as our Lord and Master, that sees and overlooks all our works; observing both what we do, and how we do it also.

That servant must be desperately bold, that will dare to be idle, or slight and perfunctory in his work, while his master's eye is

upon him. Christians should consider God's eye is always upon them; in praying, in hearing, and in every duty that they perform; yea, in every action of their whole lives. And, if the eye of a master, that is but a fellow-creature, nay but a fellow-servant, can have such awe and influence upon his servant as to make him careful how he works and what he works, and to make him diligent in his work; should not the consideration of God's eye being upon us, who stands at an infinite distance from us, much more cause a holy fear and diligence in us, in doing what our Lord and Master commands us?

(2) Fear God also, as Him, from whom you have all your power and ability to work.

Fear him, lest at any time, through any neglect or miscarriage of yours, He should be provoked to suspend his influence and withdraw his grace from you, and to leave you to your own weakness and impotence, upon whose influence all your obedience doth depend. This is the Apostle's argument in the text: "Work..... with fear.....for God worketh in you, both to will and to do." Holy diligence in obedience cannot be more strongly enforced on an ingenuous spirit, than by considering that all that strength and ability, which we have to work, is received from God; and therefore should be improved for God, lest, for our sloth, he deprive us of that of which we make no use.

(3) In working, fear God also, as Him, that will be the judge and rewarder of your works forever.

You perform them unto Him, who is to pass sentence upon them, and upon you for them: and will you then dare to do them slothfully and negligently? God will try every man's work with fire, and will call every action to a severe and strict account. Every man's work shall be seen through and through: and then it shall be known, who hath wrought the works of God, and who hath fulfilled the will of Satan; and the final doom and irreversible sentence shall then be pronounced according to men's works. God "will," says the Apostle, "render to every man according to his works: To them, who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory.....and immortality," to them he will render "eternal life: But unto them, that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness," he will render unto them "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul.....that doeth evil:" Rom. ii. 6–9. Would you but thus fear God as an upright and impartial judge, that will render unto every one according to his works, how would this prevail with you, so to work, that, at last,

you might be found of God in well doing, and receive the blessed reward and sentence of the diligent and faithful servant, to enter into your Master's joy.

DIRECTION iv. If you would work for salvation successfully, then WORK SPEEDILY, WITHOUT DELAY; AND CONSTANTLY, WITHOUT CESSATION.

1. *Work speedily, without delay.*

Delays, in all affairs, are dangerous; but, in soul affairs, usually they are damnable. For,

(1) The longer you procrastinate and delay, the greater and more difficult will your work be at last.

Corruption will be grown more tough: ill humors will be grown more stubborn: your heart will be more hardened: your affections, being more habituated, will be more firmly engaged to sin: the devil will plead right to you, by prescription; and it is hard keeping an enemy out, that hath had long possession.

(2) Consider what a desperate folly it is, to put off your work till to-morrow: you are not sure that you shall live to see another day.

And oh! what hazards do those men run, whose hopes of heaven depend upon no better foundation, than their hopes of life; and whose eternal salvation is subject to as many casualties and accidents, as are their present beings in this world. Man's breath is in his nostrils: and, yet, how do men suffer their souls and their everlasting happiness to depend upon nothing surer than their breath; that breath that every moment goes forth from them, and they know not whether ever it shall return to them again!

But, suppose your life and days should continue; and you should reach unto that time, whereof you have boasted, and wherein you have promised to mind the concernments of your soul's eternal happiness; yet, consider,

(3) The grace of God is not at your disposal.

And then, either,

[1] The outward call may cease, or it may grow more faint and low. You may not be so daily importuned and solicited for heaven, as now you are. Ordinances and opportunities may cease; or you, for your contempt, may be given over to contempt and neglect of them.

[2] The inward dictates of your own consciences and the motions of the Holy Spirit may cease. Conscience may be bribed to silence: and the Holy Ghost may be commissioned to depart after

this present opportunity; and never more may you have his breathings and movings upon your hearts, if pou do not now listen to them.

[3] If inward motions do continue, are you sure, after this moment's refusal, that you shall obtain that grace from God, that may make you willing to close with those motions? Leave not, therefore, the eternal salvation of your precious and immortal souls at such hazards and delays. "Now is the accepted time.....now is the day of salvation: To-day, therefore, if ye will hear his voice, even while it is called To-day, harden not your hearts:" for this is the only time and season for working.

2. As you must work speedily, without delay; so you must work *constantly, without cessation or intermission.*

To stand still, is to backslide; and to cease working, is to undo and unravel what you have wrought. You are not like men, that row in a still water; who, though they slack their course, yet find themselves in the same station; but you are to go against tide and stream; the tide of your own corruptions, and the stream of other men's actions and examples. And the least intermission here will be to your loss: hereby you will be carried far down the tide; yea, and much pains and labor will scarce suffice to regain what a little sloth hath lost.

The Lord make what hath been spoken profitable. Amen.

THE

# ASSURANCE OF SALVATION,

## A POWERFUL MOTIVE

## TO SERVE GOD WITH FEAR.

*Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire.* HEB. xii. 28, 29.

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### INTRODUCTION.

THIS text contains in it a doctrine, a use, and a motive.

The doctrine is, "We" have received "a kingdom which cannot be moved."

The use or inference from thence is this: Therefore, "Let us serve God."

And the motive, to enforce this exhortation, is in these words, "for our God is a consuming fire."

First. In the first part, which is the thesis or position, "We" have received "a kingdom which cannot be moved," we must know, there is twofold kingdom: a kingdom of grace, set up in the heart of a saint, where Christ alone reigns as sole monarch and sovereign; and a kingdom of glory, prepared for us in the highest heavens, where we shall reign as kings with Christ forever.

If we take it in the former sense, for the kingdom of grace, so the Apostle saith, we have a kingdom, that is, we have it already in possession. Christ hath established his dominion over every believer: and, though he sits personally upon his throne in heaven; yet he rules in us by the vicegerency and deputation of his Spirit that received commission from him, and also by the law of his word energized by him.

If we understand it in the latter sense, for the kingdom of glory, which seems most congruous to the design of the Apostle, so also, we have a kingdom, and that in a fourfold sense.

By grace, giving us the earnest of it.

By faith, realizing it.

By hope, embracing it. And,

By the promises, assuring of it.

*First.* We have a kingdom of glory, in the earnest and first-fruits of it.

The comforts and graces of the Spirit are very often, in Scripture, called "the earnest of our inheritance:" so you have it in 2 Cor. i. 22, and in Eph. i. 14. An earnest, you know, is always part of the bargain: so God, to assure us that he is in earnest when he promiseth heaven and glory to us, hath already given us part of it in the graces of his Spirit. Grace and glory are one and the same thing, in a different type, in a small and a capital letter: here, we have heaven in the germ and commencement; hereafter, we shall have it in consummate perfection: glory lies hidden and contained in grace, as the beauty of a flower lies undeveloped in the seed. Therefore the Psalmist saith, Ps. xcvii. 11: "Light is sown for the righteous:" that is, the light of joy and of a future life are in the graces of God's children as in their seed, and they shall certainly bud and sprout forth into perfect happiness.

*Secondly.* We have a kingdom of glory, because faith realizeth things future, and giveth an existence and being to things that are not.

This is that grace, to which nothing is past nor nothing future. It contracts all things into present time, and makes all actually existent. It draws things, that are at a great distance from it, near to itself: and thus the Galatians' faith represented the death of Christ so visibly to them, that the Apostle told them, he was "crucified among" them: Gal. iii 1. It dives down into the gulf of future times, and bringeth up things that as yet are not. It is much the same to a strong faith, to have heaven, or to believe it: this grace makes heaven as really present, as if it were already in possession: and therefore it is called, in Heb. xi. 1; "the evidence of things not seen, the substance of things hoped for;" it is the very being of things hoped for; the being of those things, that as yet have no being.

*Thirdly.* We have a kingdom of glory, as in the view of faith, so also in the embraces of hope.

And therefore hope is called, the "anchor of the soul.....which entereth into that within the veil:" Heb. vi. 19, that is, into heaven: it lays hold on all that glory, that is there laid up and kept in reversion for us. Hope is, in itself, a solid and substantial possession; for it stirs up the same affections, it excites the same joy, delight, and complacency, as fruition itself doth. It is the taster of all our comforts: and, if they be but temporal, it not only tastes them, but sometimes quite devours them; and leaves us in suspense, whether it be not better to be expectants than enjoyers. Heavenly hope gives the same real contentment and satisfaction:

it antedates our glory; and puts us into the possession of our inheritance, whilst we are yet in our nonage: only it doth not spend and devour its object, beforehand, as early hope doth.

*Fourthly.* We have a kingdom of glory, because God hath assured to us the possession of it by his immutable word of promise.

And therefore it is called "eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began:" Tit. i. 2. God's word is as good security, as actual possession. It is this word, that gives us right and title to it; and this right we may well call ours. Hence we have it, and it is observable, Mark xvi. 16. "He, that believeth .....shall be saved:" here is assurance of salvation, for the future. But, in John iii. 18, it is, "He, that believeth not, is condemned already." Unbelievers are no more actually condemned, than believers are actually saved: only, what God promiseth, or what God threateneth, it is all one whether he saith it is done or it shall be done; for damnation is as sure to the one, and salvation as certain to the other, as if they were already in their final estate. So, then we have a kingdom: that is, God, who cannot lie, hath promised it; and his promise is as much as actual possession itself.

This kingdom is described to us, in the text, to be immovable. It is not like the kingdoms of the earth, that are all subject to earthquakes and commotions; but we have "a kingdom, which cannot be moved." And, if we understand this of the kingdom of grace in the hearts of believers, then the sense is, it can never be so moved as to be utterly removed: though it be shaken and battered, yet "the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal. The Lord knoweth them that are his;" as the Apostle speaks, 2 Tim. ii. 19: indeed, as earthquakes are caused by some gases confined in the bowels of the earth, so is there enough in us to cause shakings and earthquakes: there are those corrupt and sinful vapors of lusts, that are still working and heaving in our breasts; that, were not God's truth, wisdom, and power all engaged to keep and preserve us, we should be soon moved from our standing and overthrown. If we understand by it the kingdom of glory, that is certainly immovable: We have "a kingdom which cannot be moved:" there, we shall be free from the temptations of Satan, from the infirmities and corruptions of the flesh, from the mutability and fickleness of our own wills; and shall have a blessed necessity imposed upon us, to be forever holy, and to be forever happy.

Secondly, From the thesis, the Apostle proceeds to draw a prac-

tical inference: wherein we may observe, both what he exhorts us to do, and how we ought to do it.

The matter of the duty, to which he exhorts us, is, "Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God."

The manner how we ought to serve God is set down in one word, and that is acceptably: "Let us.....serve God acceptably:" which that we may do, he directs us to the means; and that is, in all our serving God let us address ourselves to him, "with reverence and godly fear:" let us serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.

I shall only as I pass along, take a taste of this part of the text, before I fix upon what I principally intend. The word here translated *reverence* signifies shamefacedness or bashfulness; such, as is commendable in inferiors, while they are in the presence of their superiors. And it applies in it two things: first, consciousness of our own vileness and unworthiness: secondly, an overawing sense of another's excellency. For modesty, or reverence, consists in these two things; in humble thoughts of ourselves, and in a high esteem of others. Unto this the Apostle exhorts us in the text, by the word *reverence*. Whence observe this: that a due sense of our own vileness and of God's glorious majesty, is an excellent qualification in all our services to make them acceptable. Let us "serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear."

Thirdly. You have, in the text, the motive, whereby the Apostle enforceth this exhortation: "For our God is a consuming fire."

These words are cited out of Deut. iv. 24, where Moses, to bring the Israelites from idolatry, represents God to them as "a jealous God and a consuming fire." And here the Apostle makes use of them, to compose men into a holy awe and reverence of God in serving him. Whence observe,

*First.* That an irreverent and fearless worship of the true God, provokes him and deserves his consuming wrath, as well as the idolatrous worship of a false god.

Moses makes use of the same words, to deter the Israelites from idolatry and worshiping a false god, as the Apostle makes use of, to excite us to a reverence and worshiping of the true God.

*Secondly.* Whereas it is said, that "our God is a consuming fire;" observe, That our peculiar interest in God is no encouragement to cast off our most awful fear of God. Though he hath laid down his enmity against us, yet he hath not laid down his sovereignty and majesty over us. Indeed, these two expressions, "our God," and "a consuming fire," at first blush and glance seem to look strangely

and wistly one upon another: but the Holy Ghost hath excellently tempered them. He is "our God:" this corrects that despairing fear, that otherwise would seize upon us, from the consideration of God as a consuming fire. And he is "a consuming fire" also: this corrects that presumptuous irreverence unto which the consideration of our interest in God, without such correction, might possibly embolden us.

I. You see now, from the explication of these words, what an excellent copious portion of Scripture I have unfolded unto you, wherein indeed is contained the true art and method of serving God acceptably. It is the fear of God, that quickens us to serve him: and this fear of God is pressed upon us and wrought in us, by two strong principles: we have "a kingdom:" and, what is strange too for those that have a kingdom of God, "our God is a consuming fire," and therefore let us fear him.

Now this is such a principle, that carnal men are not apt to apprehend it. They say, "If we have 'a kingdom, that cannot be removed,' why then should we fear? And if 'God' be such 'a consuming fire,' why should we ever expect that kingdom, since we are but as stubble?" But our Apostle hath well conjoined them together: and, from that conjunction, I shall raise and prosecute this one PROPOSITION.

THAT, EVEN THOSE, WHO STAND HIGHEST IN THE LOVE AND FAVOR OF GOD, AND HAVE THE FULLEST ASSURANCE THEREOF, AND OF THEIR INTEREST IN HIM AS THEIR GOD, OUGHT, NOTWITHSTANDING, TO FEAR HIM AS A SIN-REVENGING GOD AND A CONSUMING FIRE.

In prosecuting this proposition, I shall show you how consistent the grace of fear is with other graces of the Spirit: that it is no impediment to full assurance, love of God, a spirit of adoption, holy rejoicing, nor holy boldness.

i. In showing you that the grace of fear is *no impediment to full assurance,* I shall consider,

What fear of God it is, with which a believer should always overawe his heart.

Upon what grounds and considerations he is thus to do. What there is in a reconciled God, that may be a ground and motive to overawe our hearts with a fear of his majesty.

1. *What fear of God it is, with which a believer should overawe his heart.*

Fear, in general, is described to be a passion or an affection of the mind, arising from the apprehension of some great evil with difficulty avoidable.

And, as it is observed by some, it usually carries in it three things.

A doubtfulness or uncertainty of the event, what it may prove: and this is always a torment to the mind.

A terror, that ariseth from the greatness of the evil apprehended and feared.

A careful flight and aversion from it.

(1) There is, in fear, *a doubtfulness and uncertainty of the event.*

And this is a torment, when a man is racked in suspense and doubt what to expect; whether or no the vengeance of God will not fall heavy upon him; whether or no he be not fuel on which this consuming fire will forever prey. Now this is not that fear, which the Apostle, in this text, exhorts us to serve God withal: no, to "serve God with reverence and godly fear," is not to serve him with a doubtful, anxious, and solicitous fear of what the event may prove: nay, such a fear as this, is inconsistent with actual assurance; and those, who are perplexed with it, cannot say we have a kingdom, and cannot fear their God as a consuming fire There may be a genuine, awful fear of God as "a consuming fire;" where there is not the least doubt remaining concerning our final state; where the soul is fully assured, that God will be to him not a fire to consume him, but a sun to cherish him forever. I will give you one or two remarkable scriptures to this purpose. In Heb. iv. 1; "Let us fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it:" here the Apostle quickens them to the exercise of holiness, from the fear of falling short of heaven: yea, though they had assurance by God's promise of it; "lest, *a promise* being left us of entering into his rest," yet you should fall short of it. And so the Apostle triumphs in his assurance, 2 Cor. v. 1; "We know that.....we have a house..... eternal in the heavens:" and yet, in verse 11, he quickens himself to the discharge of his ministerial office, from the fear of God's wrath; "knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men:" though he was assured of glory, yet he quickens himself to the discharge of his ministerial function, by the fear of God's wrath. So that it is evident there may be a fear of God's wrath exciting unto duty; where yet there is a full assurance, beyond all doubting and hesi-

tation, of escaping wrath. So that this is not that fear, unto which the Apostle excites them who have assurance.

(2) There is, in fear, *a terror:* a shivering in the soul, upon the apprehension of the greatness of the evil feared, but avoided too: and this is consistent with full assurance.

Thus the terror of past dangers sometimes causeth as much terror, as if we were again to encounter them. So, when believers look back upon that wrath and fiery indignation, that they have narrowly escaped; upon that lake of brimstone, that boils and burns behind them, wherein thousands of others are forever swallowed up; this cannot but affect them with a holy horror and fear of God's wrath against sinners, though they have full assurance of his love.

(3) There is also, in fear, *a flight and aversion from the evil feared:* and this, also, is consistent with full assurance.

Noah had full assurance from the promise of God, for his preservation from the deluge; and yet it is said, that Noah, being "moved with fear, prepared an ark." Full assurance of escape from evil is far from hindering, as some calumniate it, the use of means to prevent that evil: yea, the assurance, that we have to escape hell and wrath, is of the greatest and most effectual influence, to make us careful to use those means whereby we may escape it. See this in 2 Cor. vii. 1; "Having these promises.....let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness both of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God:" so, in Tit. ii. 11–13; "The grace of God, that bringeth salvation".....teacheth us to deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts,.....Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of.....our Lord Jesus Christ:" so, in 1 John iii. 3; "Every man, that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as He is pure."

Thus you see what fear it is, to which the Apostle exhorts believers, who have a kingdom: not a fear of perplexing doubtfulness, but such as is consistent with their full assurance: that is, so to fear the wrath of God, as to have their hearts affected with terror at the greatness and insupportableness of that wrath, though they have escaped it; and to fear so, as to avoid all sin, and all that exposeth to that wrath. In these two senses, they, who are assured that God is their God, ought to fear him as "a consuming fire."

2. Let us now see *upon what grounds and considerations a believer, who is assured of God's love and favor to him, should yet fear him.*

(1) As a consuming fire.

[1] The consideration of that mighty and dreadful power, that God puts forth in the punishing and afflicting the damned, may strike fear into the hearts of those, that are fully assured of God's love and favor to them.

Such a fear as this, the holy angels themselves have: though they are secured by Christ in that blessed state and condition that they enjoy; yet, to see God stripping and making bare his arm, to lay on weighty strokes of everlasting vengeance upon their fellow angels that are fallen, makes them tremble and stand astonished at the almighty power of God: and this keeps them at a due distance, in their thoughts and apprehensions of his dreadful majesty. And should it not much more make us to tremble with an awful respect of the power of God, to consider how he crushes and breaks the damned in hell, by his own almighty arm stretched out, in the full power of his wrath, to their everlasting destruction? It is from this power of God, that Christ himself enforceth the fear of God: Mat. x. 28. "Fear him, which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell:" though God should assure you, that he would never destroy you in hell; yet, because he is able to do it, therefore you should fear him.

[2] This fear may arise in the hearts of the children of God who are most assured of his love, from the consideration of the wrath and dreadful severity of God, as well as of his power.

If a father corrects his slave in his wrath, this will cause fear and dread in the son, though he knows that wrath shall never fall upon him: so, a child of God, who is assured of the tender love and favor of God to himself, yet, when he sadly considers that wrath and indignation that is in God against the damned; when he sees his heavenly Father angry, though it be not against him; this must needs strike a reverential fear and awe into his soul. Now this reverential fear will remain forever: "The fear of the Lord endureth forever." Yea, when the children of God shall be made forever happy in heaven, yet this fear shall be then increased, and not at all diminished: the more they see of the power of the wrath and severity of God executed upon the damned, the more they fear and reverence this powerful, this sin-revenging God. And this kind of fear is no prejudice to their full assurance and joy, nor shall it be prejudicial to their complete and perfect happiness in heaven.

[3] The consideration of the desert of sin, should cause a holy fear of God, even in those, that are fully assured of his love.

When a child of God looks upon sin, and sees what wrath and

torment he hath deserved by it, though he be assured by the testimony of the Spirit of God that he is pardoned; yet it cannot but fright him to consider that he should deserve so great condemnation: as a malefactor, though he be pardoned, yet if he be present at the execution of his fellow offenders, must needs be struck with fear and horror, that he should be guilty of the same crimes, for which they are to suffer such sharp and cruel punishments. What the thief on the cross said unto his fellow thief, "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?" the same may I say to believers: Do not you fear God, seeing you deserve, at least to be in the same condemnation with those wretches, that lie howling in hell?

[4] Another ground of fear is, that it is in itself possible, that all this wrath should be your portion forever; even yours, who are most assured of glory.

And is not this just cause of fear; if not of expectation, yet at least of terror? Indeed, as God hath been graciously pleased to bind himself in a covenant of grace and mercy to you, so it is impossible that this wrath should fall upon you; but, yet, such a supposition as this is enough to cause fear in the most assured heart; to think, that, if God had not engaged himself by promise to deliver him from that wrath, what then would have been his condition to all eternity? Would not such thoughts as these make you tremble? Suppose a man were fast chained to the top of some high rock, hanging over a bottomless gulf; though he knew and was assured that he should not fall into it, being immovably fastened there; yet, when he looks down that deep and dangerous precipice, and sees the gulf foaming and raging under him, will not a cold fear thrill through his heart to think, "O! if I were not here fastened by a strong chain to this immovable rock, what would become of me? Even so, Believers, you that are most assured to escape hell, this is your condition: you are fastened to the Rock of Ages by the unchangeable promise of God, that will ever hold you fast; but yet, every time that you look down into the bottomless gulf that is under you, where thousands are swallowed up to all eternity, doth not such a thought as this is fright you, "O! if I were not fastened to this immovable rock; if God had not made an everlasting covenant with me, ordered in all things and sure; I should also have been swallowed up with the rest of the world, and have gone down quick into hell?" Alas! we are all of us held over the lake of fire and brimstone in the hands of God: some, he holds in the left-hand of his common providence; and others, he holds in

the right-hand of his special grace: those, whom he holds only in the hands of his providence, he lets fall and drop, one after another, into hell, where they are swallowed up and lost eternally: those, that he holds in the hands of his grace, it is true it is impossible upon that supposition, that ever they should fall into hell; yet, when they think, "O! if we were not upheld!" yea, how possible it was that they should not have been upheld; this apprehension must needs strike them with fear and terror: though not with a perplexing doubtfulness, concerning the safety of their condition; yet with a doubtful apprehension of the possibility of what would have been their condition, if God had held them over hell only, by the hand of his common providence.

[5] Though you are assured that you shall escape this eternal death, yet it will be a narrow escape: and that may cause fear.

It will be an escape with very much labor and difficulty. Though you are held in the hands of God, yet he leads you along to heaven by the gates of hell: and this is sufficient to cause fear. Our way to heaven is so strait, the rubs in it so many, our falls by them so frequent, our enemies so potent: that, though our assurance may make us not to fear but that, in the end, we shall escape hell; yet it will be high presumption for us, not to fear how we may escape it. The Apostle brings in the salvation of the elect themselves with a *scarcely:* 1 Pet. iv. 18; "If the righteous scarcely be saved." Now this *scarcely* doth not imply that there is any uncertainty in the end, but only the great difficulty in the means of obtaining it. So, then, the end is certain; that is, a believer's salvation from hell: and that is just cause of rejoicing. But the means are very difficult and laborious: and that is just cause of fear.

Briefly, then, to apply it, in one word. Though you are assured, through faith, of the pardon of your sins, yet tremble at the thought of that wrath and hell, that you have escaped. It is observed, that those are the fixed stars, that tremble most. So Christians, who are fixed immovably in the unchangeable love of God, as stars fixed to the heavens in their orbs: yet they are most of all in trepidation and trembling, when they reflect upon themselves; and think, that, instead of being stars in heaven, they might have been firebrands in hell. Those, to me, are suspicious professors, that make a great blaze with their joys, in the apprehensions of their right to heaven; but never tremble, under the apprehensions of their deserts of hell.

(2) Having showed you upon what account God is to be feared

as he is "a consuming fire," in the next place I shall show you what there is in the consideration of God, as "*our God*," that may enforce a holy awe and fear of him.

And, indeed if ever it were necessary to press men to a due fear and awe of God, it is so now: since, on the one hand, the open profaneness of ungodly men, and, on the other hand, the pert sauciness of some notional professors who are apt to think that communion with God consists in a familiar rudeness, do plainly testify to all the world, that there is little fear or reverence of him in their hearts. And now, whilst I am showing what reason there is, that God's dearest children should fear him as a reconciled Father, let wicked men, in the mean while, sadly consider with themselves, what great cause then they have to fear him, who is their sworn enemy: if God's smiles are tempered with that majesty that makes them awful; surely his frowns then must needs carry in them an astonishing terror, that makes them insupportable. We may observe how unexpectedly, sometimes, from the goodness and mercy of God, that is, the sweetest and most natural attractive of love, the Scripture draws an inference to fear God: Ps. cxxx. 4; "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared:" not only a sin-revenging, but a sin-pardoning God, is here set before us as the object of our fear: these two sister-graces, fear and love, are nourished in the soul by the same attribute, God's pardoning mercy: the great sinner in the gospel is said to love much, because much was forgiven her; and, here, much fear, as well as much love, is the result and issue of God's pardoning grace. And so you have it, in Hos. iii. 5; "They shall fear the Lord and his goodness." And, in Exod. xv. 11, Moses, describing the most glorious attributes of God, tells us, that he is "glorious in holiness, fearful in praises:" even then, when we are to praise God for his mercy; yet are we to fear him, as being fearful in praises. And, therefore, Nehemiah, praying to God, says, "O Lord.....the great and the terrible God." Wherein? Is it in overwhelming kingdoms; in bringing upon them decreed destruction? Is it in the fierce execution of his wrath against sinners? No; says he, "O Lord.....the terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him;" Neh. i. 5; ix. 32.

Let us now consider what there is in the mercy and favor of God, as he is a reconciled God unto us and in covenant with us, that may justly render him the object of our fear.

[1] The consideration of that dreadful way and method, that

God took to manifest his mercy towards us, is sufficient to affect our hearts with fear, though we stand fully possessed of his favor.

In Gen. xxviii., when God had made many gracious promises all along that chapter unto Jacob, of blessing him, of keeping him in all his ways, and of multiplying his seed as the dust of the earth, you would think this was no terrible thing: and yet, because God reveals this mercy to him in an awful and amazing manner, a gap is opened in heaven, a bright ladder reaching from earth to heaven; God on the top of it, angels on every round of it: though the message was joyful, yet the strange kind of delivering of the message makes Jacob cry out, "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven:" Gen. xxviii. 17. The very gate of heaven becomes dreadful, when it is represented in such a majestic manner.

But, the way, that God took for his mercy to arrive at us, is much more dreadful, than any such dream or vision; and, therefore, we should be the more deeply affected with fear and trembling, even then when God speaks peace and pardon to us: for, if we consider either the terms upon which he is become ours, or the way by which he discovereth himself to be ours, both of them are full of dread and terror.

1st. It cannot but strike our hearts with fear, to reflect upon those dreadful terms, upon which God is contented to be induced to become our God.

His mercy towards us is procured upon terms of infinite justice and severity. Divine vengeance arrests our surety, and exacts from him the utmost satisfaction. That curse, that would forever have blasted and withered the souls of all mankind, seizeth upon Christ in all its malignity. That wrath, some few drops of which scald the damned in hell, was given him to drink off in a full and overflowing cup: He did bear "the chastisement of our peace," and by "his stripes we are healed." Nor would God, upon lower terms, have consented to a reconciliation between wretched man and himself, than the precious blood of his only Son. As of old, friendship between two persons was wont to be attested and sealed by a sacrifice, as we find it both among heathen authors and also in Scripture; an instance of which we have of Laban, in Gen. xxxi. 54, where Laban and Jacob, returning to amity, make a ratification of it by a sacrifice: so, the atonement, that God made between us and himself, is solemnized by a sacrifice, even the sacrifice of his own Son, "as of a Lamb without spot" or blemish. In this blood, the treaty between God and man stands ratified and

confirmed. O dreadful mercy, that clasps and embraces us about with arms dyed red in the blood of Jesus Christ! But, is not this ground enough, to cause a holy fear of God to seize upon every soul, that shall but seriously consider this sad tragedy of pardoning grace? If a king resolve to forgive a malefactor, upon no other terms than a pardon writ with the last drop of the heart-blood of his dearest friend, who is there, that is so hardened, that will not tremble at such a mercy as this is, though it save him? So is the case between God and us: the contents of the pardon are joyful, but it is written all with the blood of Jesus Christ, reeking warm from his very heart; and who then would not fear even a forgiving God?

2dly. Consider the way and method, that God takes with us when he becomes our God; and that is most dreadful, and must needs make the most confirmed heart to shake with fear and trembling.

Indeed God deals not with us in such rigor, as he dealt with Jesus Christ his Son: but yet, usually, when he becomes our God, when he enters upon us as his possession; first, he shakes all the foundations of our hearts, breathes in flames of fire into our very marrow, cramps our consciences and unjoints our souls. O, the tempests and storms of wrath, that God pours into a wounded conscience, when it is under searching convictions! O, the smart and anguish of a wounded spirit, when God, instead of balm, shall only chafe it with brimstone! And yet this is the common method, that God useth to prepare souls for himself: he seems to arm himself in all his terrors against them, singling them out to the conflict; and, when they give up themselves for lost, lying gasping for hope, scarcely at length are administered some few reviving comforts. It is with these, as it was with the children of Israel upon Sinai: first, they were astonished with a confused noise of thunder, the air full of lightning, the mountains all on a flame, and the earth trembling under them, before they heard that comfortable voice, in Exod. xx. 2: "I am the Lord thy God:" so is it with convinced sinners: God dischargeth his threatenings against them, that speak more dreadfully to them than a voice of thunder: he speaks to them out of the midst of flames, and every word scorcheth up their hearts; and, when they stand trembling and despairing, once at length they hear those reviving words, "I am the Lord thy God." What hearts are there now, that such a dreadful mercy as this would not overawe? Those discoveries of God's love, that break in upon the soul in the midst of a doleful and gloomy night

of despair and despondency, work naturally a sweet kind of terror and a shivering joy.

[2] Though God be our God; yet to consider, that it is possible to lose his favor and the sense of it, is enough to affect the heart with a holy fear, even of a reconciled God.

It is true, God's original and fountain-love can never be dried up: Whom he loves, he loves "unto the end:" John xiii. 1. And "my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him:" Ps. lxxxix. 33. Yet, the streams of this fountain-love may be very much obstructed from flowing freely down upon us: though we shall never again be children of wrath, yet we may be children under wrath. Every presumptuous sin, which we commit, raiseth God's displeasure against us: he is angry with us, upon every more notorious and known sin, which we commit: and since, then, we are in danger every day of falling into gross and foul sins, and are kept only by his almighty and free grace from the worst, what cause have we to fear, lest we forfeit his favor and turn his displeasure against us! Yea, again, though we should be preserved from sin and continue in his love, yet we cannot assure ourselves that we shall continue in the sense and comfortable apprehension of it; comfort is most arbitrary, and at God's free disposal; neither hath he engaged himself to bestow it upon any by any absolute promise: though now his lamp shines clearly upon thy tabernacle, and thou rejoicest in his smiles; yet how quickly may he wrap thee up in a dark night of desertion, and turn all thy songs into mourning! Thou, therefore, that art now assured that God is thy God, fear lest ere long thou mayest not think him to be so: certain thou art he is so now; yet, before it be long, possibly, through thy miscarriage, thou mayest not think him to be so: and it is all one, as to comfort or discomfort, whether God be thy God or not, if thou dost not apprehend him to be so, and therefore fear him.

[3] Every frown and stroke toucheth to the quick, that cometh from a reconciled God and a loving Father; and, therefore, the rather fear, because he is thy God.

Every little blow from a father strikes deeper and causeth more smart, than greater blows from other persons: others strike the body; but, when a loving father strikes, he wounds the heart. So is it here: the nearness of the relation between God and us, puts an anguish and sting into every correction. As the Psalmist speaks in his own case, Ps. lv. 12, 13: "It was not an enemy, that reproached me.....neither was it he, that hated me.....then could I have

borne it.....But it was thou, a man, mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance." These are sad accents. And so is it here: the blows of a sin-revenging God may indeed break the back; but the blows of a gracious and reconciled Father break the heart. Fear, therefore, lest, through some miscarriage of thine (and of such miscarriages thou art every day guilty) thou shouldest provoke thy God to lay some heavy stroke upon thee; which will be the more smart, from the aggravation that provoked love puts upon it.

And thus you see now, in these three particulars, what ground there is from the consideration of God as our God, to enforce a holy fear of his divine majesty upon our hearts. He is our God; therefore fear him, because the way that he became ours is most dreadful: he is our God, as yet; fear lest we may not apprehend him so long: he is our God: therefore fear him, because every stroke and frown from a God in covenant comes with an aggravated smart and sting.

ii. Now this holy fear, as it is no enemy to full assurance, as I have showed you, so neither, IS IT ANY WAY PREJUDICIAL TO A MOST ARDENT LOVE OF GOD.

Filial love and filial fear are twins: but not such as Jacob and Esau, that strive to supplant one another. The pure flame of divine and heavenly love is like other flames: the higher it mounts, the more it vibrates and trembles.

Indeed St. John tells us, 1 John iv. 18, that "perfect love casteth out fear." It should seem then, that all fear of God is swallowed up in those hearts, that are once brought into a holy love. But the Apostle doth very well explain himself, in the reason that he gives of this assertion, in the next words: "perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment."

Hence, therefore, we may distinguish a twofold fear of God.

The one is tormenting; causing unquiet rollings and commotions in the heart, in a sad suspense of what our future and eternal state may prove: and this is slavish. Now this fear perfect love casts out and expels: for where divine love is perfected in the soul, there are no more such suspenses, hesitations, and doubtings, what will become of it to eternity. Now by *perfect love* may be meant, either that state of perfection, to which we shall attain in glory, where our whole work to all eternity shall be to love and please God; or, else, that perfection, that consists in its sincerity in this life. If we take it for that perfection of love, that shall forever burn in our hearts when we ourselves shall be made perfect; so,

it is certain that it will cast out all tormenting fears: for, certainly, if, in heaven, hope itself shall be abolished, much more shall fear be abolished; for, there, every saint shall have much more than a full assurance, even a full fruition of glory, and they shall know themselves to be forever confirmed in that blessed state which shall prevent all doubts and fears. If we understand it of that perfection of love, that we may attain to in this life, so also the strong and vigorous actings of love to God cast out all tormenting fears: it is not possible, that that soul, which actually loves God with a vigorous and most ardent affection, should, at the same time, be racked with distracting fears of hell and damnation; for it is the sense of God's love unto the soul, that draws from it reciprocal love again unto God: "We love him," says the Apostle, "because he first loved us:" that is, as strong as our apprehensions are of God's love to us, so strong will our love be in its returns to God again: water riseth naturally as high as it springs; wherefore, the assurance of God's love, being the spring from whence our love flows, such as is our love, such will be our assurance also: if then our love be strong in its actings, it must needs cast out fear: because it flows from that assurance, with which tormenting fear is utterly inconsistent.

But there is another kind of fear, that is not tormenting: and that is an awful frame of heart, struck with reverential apprehensions of God's infinite majesty, and our own vileness and unworthiness: and this, perfect love doth not cast out; but it perfects this awful, sedate, calm fear of God. The angels and the glorified saints in heaven, whose love is so perfect, that it can neither admit of an increase nor abatement, yet stand in awe and fear of the terrible majesty of the great God: the same infinite excellencies of the divine nature, that attract their love, do also excite their fear. See how the prophet makes this an argument to fear God: Jer. x. 7. "Who would not fear thee, O King of nations?" for, said he, in all the earth "there is none like unto thee:" one would rather think that God's unparalleled excellencies and perfections should be a motive to love: "Who would not love thee, O King of saints, since there is none in all the earth like thee?" yea, but filial fear and filial love are of so near a kind and cognation, that they may well be enforced by one and the same argument. This is the excellence of divine love: it is an attractive of love, and it is an excitement unto fear.

Well, then, though we have no chilling fear of a hot and scorching hell; yet let us have an awful, reverential fear of the

glorious God, whose excellencies are such as cannot be matched, nor scarcely imitable by any in heaven or in earth.

iii. The fear of God is NOT CONTRARY TO THAT FREE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION, WHICH WE RECEIVE IN OUR FIRST CONVERSION.

It may, perhaps, seem to some, that the Apostle opposeth them in Rom. viii. 15. "Ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear; but.....the Spirit of adoption, whereby you cry Abba, Father."

To this I answer: That, by "the Spirit of bondage" here, the Apostle means the legal work of the Holy Ghost in conviction, that is preparatory to conversion: which work, usually, is accompanied with dreadful terrors, apprehending God not as a reconciled Father, but as an incensed and severe judge. Now, says the Apostle, "ye have not received" *this* "Spirit of bondage again" *thus* "to fear:" this is not that fear, that the consideration of God, as your God and reconciled Father, excited in you: this is not that fear, unto which the Apostle exhorts Christians; but an awful, reverential fear of God, whereby we should stand in awe of his dread majesty, so as to be preserved from whatever may be an offence to his purity. And if, in any night of desertion, it should happen that the hearts of true believers should be overwhelmed with dismal fears, apprehending God as enraged and incensed against them, standing in doubt of the goodness of their spiritual condition; if this seize upon them after they have had "the Spirit of adoption" let them know that this fear is not from a work of the Holy Ghost in them: they have not received "the Spirit of bondage" again so to fear: it is not a work of the Holy Ghost to excite in them doubts and fears of their spiritual condition, after they have once had assurance of the goodness thereof; but it ariseth either from some ignorance, or from some sin that they have committed, that interposeth between them and the clear sight of the discoveries of God's love.

Now for the better understanding of this place, because I judge it pertinent to my present purpose, I shall open it to you somewhat largely in these following particulars.

1. *The preparatory work of conversion is usually carried on in the soul by legal fears and terrors.*

I call that a legal fear, that is wrought in the soul by the dread-threatenings and denunciations of the law. The law, if we take it in its native rigor, without the merciful qualification of gospel-grace, thundered out nothing but curses, wrath, and vengeance

against every transgressor of it; representing God armed also with his almighty power to destroy them. This is that glass, that showed them their old sins in most ugly shapes: now they see them stare ghastly upon their consciences, that before allured them: the scene is quite changed, and there are nothing but dreadful apparitions of death and hell fleeting now before them; and God brandishing his flaming sword over them, ready to rive their hearts asunder. They, who lately were secure and fearless, now stand quaking under the fearful expectations of that fiery wrath and indignation, that they neither have hope to escape, nor yet have strength or patience to endure. This is that legal fear, which the curse and threatenings of the law, when set home in their full acrimony, work in the hearts of convinced sinners.

2. *This legal fear is slavish, and engenders bondage.*

There is a bondage, under the reigning power of sin; and there is a bondage, under the terrifying power of sin. The former makes a man a slave unto the devil, and the latter makes a man a slave unto God. And such slaves, are all convinced sinners, that have not yet arrived to the free and filial "Spirit of adoption;" but are kept in bondage under the wrath of God, and manacled in the fetters of their own fears. So saith the Apostle: Heb. ii. 15; to "deliver them, who, through fear of death," and of hell that follows after it, "were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

3. *This slavish fear is wrought in the soul by the Spirit of God, though it be slavish.*

For it is his office, to convince, as well as to comfort; and to cast down by the terrors of the law, as well as to raise up by the promises of the gospel: John xvi. 8; "He will reprove the world of sin;" and therefore it is said in this place, Rom. viii. 15; "Ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear;" implying, that those terrors, that seize upon the conscience, are the work of the Holy Ghost: we bring ourselves into bondage, under sin; and he brings us into bondage, under fear. If therefore, at any time, thou, who art a secure sinner, art suddenly surprised with fearful and trembling thoughts concerning thy present state of sin and thy future state of wrath, beware thou listen not to any that would persuade thee it is nothing but a fit of melancholy, or a temptation of Satan to drive thee to despair; but know assuredly, that thy conscience is now under the hand of the Holy Ghost himself: he raiseth those tempests of fear in thee: and, as usually it is fatal to divert and hush them, so is it no less than ignorant blasphemy, to impute his works to melancholy, or to the temptations of Satan.

4. *When the soul is prepared for the work of grace by the work of conviction, when it is prepared for comfort by the work of humiliation, the same Spirit, that was before a Spirit of bondage, becomes now a Spirit of adoption.*

That is, the Holy Ghost persuades and assures us of the love and favor of God; and enables us, through divine light beaming in upon our consciences, to behold him as a gracious and a reconciled Father, whom before we trembled at as a stern and terrible judge. The same wind, that, in a raging storm, tosseth the sea to and fro in restless heaps, in a calm doth only gently move and fan it with pleasing ripples. So is it here. That Spirit of God, that, in conviction, raiseth a tempest in the conscience, afterwards breathes forth a sweet calm of peace and comfort upon it: the same Spirit, that, before, was a "Spirit of bondage," when the soul is sufficiently thereby prepared for grace, becomes a "Spirit of adoption." This is that "Spirit of adoption," that is here spoken of: and it is called so, because it witnesseth with our spirits, that we are the children of God by adoption. God hath but one Son by eternal generation, and that is Jesus Christ; called, therefore, "the only-begotten of the Father:" John i. 14. He hath many sons by creation; even all mankind: so Adam is called "the son of God:" Luke iii. 38. He hath many sons also by adoption; even all, that are effectually called according to the purpose of his grace; all, that are sanctified, who are of strangers made "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ" himself, who is the natural son of God; Rom. viii. 17. Now because it is the work of the Holy Ghost to testify to us this our great privilege, that we are enrolled in the family of heaven and become the children of God, therefore he is called "the Spirit of adoption;" that is, the Spirit, that witnesseth to us our adoption.

5. *To whom the Spirit hath once been a Spirit of adoption, it never more becomes to them a Spirit of bondage and fear.*

That is, it never again proclaims war, after it hath spoken peace: it never represents God as an enraged enemy, after it hath represented him as a reconciled Father. It is true, the Spirit of God always keeps up his convincing office in the soul of the most assured saint: it convinceth him of sin, and of wrath due to him for sin. There is a twofold conviction: there is a conviction of the evil of particular actions, and there is a conviction of the evil of our state and condition; now, though upon particular miscarriages of God's children, the Holy Ghost secretly smiteth their consciences, showing them the guilt and evil of their sins, thereby

bringing them to repentance and a godly sorrow; yet the Holy Ghost never again testifieth unto them, that they are in a graceless, unregenerate, and sinful estate and condition, and in a state of wrath and condemnation: it brings them to a deep humiliation, by convincing them of the evil of their actions; but it never brings them into legal terrors, by convincing them of a sinful state. Neither, indeed, can it be so: for the Spirit of God is a Spirit of truth; and, to witness that we are yet children of wrath, who are indeed the adopted children of God, this were a false testimony, and therefore utterly abhorred by the Spirit of God, who is a Spirit of truth. Doth the same fountain send forth sweet water and bitter? Doth there proceed from one and the same mouth, blessings and curses? Certainly, the same Spirit, that hath once pronounced us to be in the love and favor of God, never after pronounceth us to be cursed, and under the wrath of God.

But you will say, "Have not the best of God's children sometimes concluded themselves to be reprobated and cast away? Have they not lain under sad and fearful apprehensions of God's wrath? Have not some of them, who formerly walked in the light of God's countenance and flourished in their assurance, yet afterwards been so dejected, that they would not entertain any comfort, or hopes of mercy and salvation?"

To this I answer: It is true, it may indeed so happen, that those saints, whose joys and comforts are at one time fresh and verdant, at another time wither and drop off; so that they look upon themselves as rotten trees, destined to make fuel for hell. Whence proceeds this? It is not from the Spirit of God: but, as carnal men are apt to mistake the first work of conviction for melancholy or for temptation, so this really proceeds from one of these two causes. When the children of God, after full assurance, come again not only to entertain doubts of their condition, but also to despair of themselves, looking on themselves as persons that God hath singled out to destruction: this proceeds not from the Holy Ghost, but from melancholy or temptation. Sometimes, natural melancholy obstructs the sense of divine comfort: as it is in clear water, when it is still and transparent the sun shines to the very bottom, but if you stir the mud, presently it grows so thick that no light can pierce into it; so it is with the children of God, though their apprehensions of God's love be as clear and transparent sometimes as the very air that the angels and glorified saints

breathe in, in heaven, yet, if once the muddy humor of melancholy stirs, they become dark, so that no light or ray of comfort can break in to the deserted soul. And then, sometimes, the devil causeth these tragedies by his temptations, that so, if it were possible, he might drive them to despair: he hates their graces, he envies their comforts: and therefore he would persuade them that all their former joys were but delusions, proud dreams and presumptuous fancies, and that they are still "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity;" and, by such suggestions as these, when he cannot hinder the work of grace, he strives what he can to hinder the sense of comfort. If, therefore, those, that have once rejoiced under the comfortable persuasions of God's love to them, the Holy Ghost witnessing himself to them to be a "Spirit of adoption" by being in them a Spirit of sanctification, now find themselves under the bondage of legal fears and terrors and slavish dejections, looking upon themselves as under the revenging wrath of God and as persons devoted to destruction; let them know, that such fears proceed not from the convictions of the Spirit of God, who hath been a "Spirit of adoption," but from the delusions of Satan: for those, that once receive "the Spirit of adoption," never receive "the Spirit of bondage again to fear;" that is, to fear with a slavish, tormenting fear.

6. *A reverential, filial fear of God, may and ought to possess our souls, while the Spirit of God, who is a Spirit of adoption, is, by the clearest evidences, actually witnessing our son-ship to us.*

Let men boast what they will of their high gospel attainments, yet certainly they have not the genuine disposition of God's children, whose love to him is not mingled with fear, and whose fear of him is not increased by their love. Love! it is the gage and measure of all our affections: and, according to the proportion of our love to God, such will be our fear; that is, the more we love God, the more we shall fear his displeasure and the loss of his favor. It is in vain for us to pretend love to God as our Father, unless we fear him also as our Lord and Master. Christ was his "only-begotten Son," and certainly had much more clear assurance of the love and favor of God, than any adopted sons can possibly have; yet the Scripture ascribes a holy, awful, reverential fear of God even unto him: Heb. v. 7. "When he had offered up prayers .....with strong crying and tears.....and was heard in that he feared:" it may be rendered, he was "heard because of his godly fear." So, in Isa. xi. 2. "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him.....the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord:" speaking of

Christ. If therefore he feared God, who was himself to be feared as God, equal to him and his Eternal Son, how much more ought we to fear the great God, who are, as it were, but upstarts in the family of heaven! we, wretched and forlorn outcasts, that were but lately raked out of the dunghill; and, by mere pity, taken up into the bosom of God, and nurtured as his children!

iv. An awful fear of God is NO IMPEDIMENT TO A HOLY REJOICING.

Indeed slavish fear damps all true joy. Those, that fear and expect the revengings of God, cannot have any true joy. They may have a kind of mad jollity, that spends itself in noise and tumults: they may roar out songs of mirth, only to drown the loud roarings of their own consciences. Such as these are like new liquor, that works over into foam and froth, when the bottom is thick and troubled: so, in this false joy, the countenance runs over with laughter, when yet the heart is brimful of the wrath of God. Of such the wise man speaks, Prov. xiv. 13; "Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful."

But a filial fear of God puts no check at all upon our holy rejoicing in him. Spiritual joy is not of that flashy nature; but it is a sober and a severe grace: it is joy, mixed with fear. And, because of the mixture of these two together, the fear of God with joy in the Lord, therefore we find these two are promiscuously ascribed each to other. So, in Isa. lx. 5. Their hearts "shall fear and be enlarged:" you know it is the property of joy to extend and enlarge the heart: fear contracts and draws it together; but here, fear is said to dilate the heart, to denote to us, that a Christian's fear is always conjoined and mingled together with his joy. And so, on the other hand, it is said, Ps. ii. 11. "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling:" fear, with trembling, is more proper and natural; but, because of the mixture of these two graces in the heart of a Christian, therefore the Holy Ghost thus expresses it, "Rejoice with trembling;" for great joys, as well as great fears, cause a kind of trembling and fluttering in the heart: as it was with the two women, whom the angels assured of Christ's resurrection, Mat. xxviii. 8. "They departed quickly from the sepulcher with fear and great joy;" so is it with those Christians, who, by the eye of faith looking upon the death and into the sepulcher of Jesus Christ, are assured that he is risen for their justification, cannot but have their hearts filled with a quaking and a

fearful joy. Even a Christian's strong praises are breathed out with a shaking and a trembling voice.

v. Godly fear LAYS NO CHECK UPON OUR HOLY FREEDOM AND BOLDNESS WITH GOD.

God hath established a throne of grace, whereon he sits; and unto which he invites his people to approach, with a becoming confidence: Heb. iv. 16: "Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace." As that emperor counted his clemency disparaged when any delivered a petition to him with a shaking hand, as though he doubted of his favor: so God loves, when we make our addresses to him, that we should do it with a full assurance of faith; nothing doubting of acceptance with him, and of an answer from him. He, that asks timorously, only begs a denial from God. But, yet, that this boldness may not degenerate into rudeness and irreverence, he requires that our freedom with him be tempered with an awful fear of him: we must come in all humility and prostration of soul, with broken hearts and bended knees, to touch that golden sceptre that he holds forth to us.

Now because I have made frequent mention of filial and slavish fear, that you may the better understand what each of these means, I shall briefly give you the difference between them.

They differ, in their concomitants, and in their effects.

FIRST. Slavish fear hath always two dreadful concomitants; and they are despair, and hatred or enmity against God.

First. In slavish fear, there is always some degree of despair.

This slavish fear is joined with dreadful expectations of wrath. A slave, that hath committed a fault, expects no other than to be punished for it without mercy: so, those, that lie under this slavish fear, apprehend and account of God no otherwise than the slothful servant; as a severe lord and a cruel tyrant, that will exact punishment from them to the utmost of their deserts: they expect no other, but that certainly God's wrath will kindle upon them and burn them eternally: and this makes them live, as the Apostle speaks in Heb. x. 27: In "a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries." This kind of horrid fear, I doubt not, is common to most wicked men: and, though they brave it out, and most of them speak high matters of their hopes of heaven and salvation; yet, at the same time, their own hearts and consciences tell them sad and misgiving stories of hell and everlasting wrath.

But a true and filial fear of God looks at the wrath of God, with

dread and terror; but not with expectation. There is the difference. Slavish fear looks upon the wrath of God; and expects it: filial fear looks upon it as due; but not with expectations that it should be inflicted upon it.

Secondly. Slavish fear is always accompanied with some degree of enmity and hatred against God.

It is natural for us to hate those, that we fear with a slavish fear. He, that thinks God will certainly punish him, must out of self-love needs be provoked to hate God. Hence is it, that the soul, that lies under the terrors of the law, wisheth that there was no such thing as hell and eternal damnation; nay, that there was no God to inflict this upon it. This proceeds from this slavish fear of God.

But a reverential fear of God is joined with a holy love; as children who love their parents, but yet stand in awe of them.

SECONDLY. For their effects: and that, both as to sin, and as to duty. First. As to sin.

*First.* Slavish fear dreads nothing but hell and punishment; but Godly fear dreads sin itself. The one fears only to burn: the other fears to sin. As Austin saith well, "He fears hell only, who fears not to sin, but fears to burn; but he fears to sin, who hates sin as he would hate hell."

*Secondly.* Slavish fear usually restrains only from external, and those also the more gross and notorious acts of sin: but holy fear overawes the heart from inward and secret sins; yea, from the least sins whatsoever.

Secondly. And then, as for duty also, in two things briefly.

*First.* A slavish fear of God makes men to consult how they may fly from God: as Adam, when he had brought guilt upon his conscience by his fall, hid himself from God in the garden. Guilt loves not the presence of its judge.

But godly fear is still exciting the soul to approach near to God in duty. And therefore David saith, Ps. v. 7; "In thy fear will I worship towards thy holy temple." The fear of God encourageth the soul in the performance of duty.

*Secondly.* Slavish fear contents itself with external performances: just so much as will serve the turn, to satisfy the demands of conscience.

But holy fear sanctifies the Lord in duty, as well as satisfies conscience. And therefore you have it, in Isa. viii. 13; "Sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and.....your dread."

II. I come now to the APPLICATION.

USE i. And the first use shall be by way of corollary. IF THE CONSIDERATION OF GOD AS A CONSUMING FIRE OUGHT TO AFFECT THE MOST ASSURED CHRISTIAN WITH A HOLY FEAR AND DREAD OF GOD, HOW MUCH MORE THEN MAY IT SHRINK AND SHRIVEL UP THE HEARTS OF UNGODLY SINNERS!

If it make God's own children tremble, to look into hell, and to see those heaps of miserable wretches that are there burning forever, shall it not much more make you tremble, who are liable every moment to be bound in bundles, and to be cast in to burn among them? When a city is on fire, it is terrible, to see it rage, afar off; to see it dart up smoke and flames, though at a distance; and he, that is not affected with it is inhuman: but he is more than stupid, that doth not tremble to see it devour whole streets before it, ruining all till it approach near his own dwelling. Sirs, this consuming fire hath already seized upon millions of others, and burnt them down into the lowest hell. Do you not hear Dives, in the gospel, cry "Fire, Fire?" The greatest part of the world is already burnt down: and, if their case makes not your hearts to shake and tremble, yet methinks your own should. This fire is catching and kindling upon your souls; and, the next moment, may make you brands in hell. But, alas! what hope is there to affright men that are fast asleep? Such a dead security hath seized upon the hearts of most, that it is almost impossible to rouse them; and there is but little hope, but that they will be burnt in this their sleep.

Yet, if it may be possible to awaken you, consider,

1. That *it is only God's wrath against sinners, that makes him terrible to his saints.*

They are afraid of that fiery indignation, that burned against the wicked: and shall not the wicked then much more be afraid, that must themselves feel it? "Our God," says the Apostle, "is a consuming fire." But to whom is he such a consuming fire? Not to those, certainly, whose God he is: "He shall burn up all the wicked of the earth as stubble." That God doth not always style himself a gracious God and a reconciled Father, but sometimes puts on dreadful titles, his children owe it to the wicked: against them alone it is, that he arrays himself with all his terrors. As a father may affright his children, by putting on those arms, that he useth only against his enemies; so God daunts his own children, by appearing in his dread power, his severe justice and consuming

wrath: but how much more may it appal his enemies, upon whom he intends to execute all this in the utmost rigor and extremity!

2. Another consideration, that may make the most secure sinner to tremble, is this: That *God himself will be the immediate inflicter of their punishments.*

They shall be consumed by fire, and offered up as a burnt-sacrifice to the wrath and justice of God; and that fire, that shall forever burn them, is God himself: "God is a consuming fire." I do not deny, but that there is another material fire, prepared and blown up in hell for the punishment of the damned; but, certainly, their most subtle and exquisite torture shall be from God himself, who is this "consuming fire." This wrath of God, which shall forever burn and surround the souls of the damned, is called "fiery indignation," Heb. x. 27. That fire, that destroyed Nadab and Abihu, was but a type of this; and the antitype infinitely transcends the type: the dreadfulness of their temporal death by fire was but a faint resemblance of the death of the soul. What fire must that be, of which that extraordinary fire, that fell down from heaven itself, was but a mere shadow? As the fire, that came down upon Elijah's sacrifice, did lick up the water that was poured into the trenches; so this "fiery indignation" of God shall, in hell, melt down the damned, as it were, and then lick up their very spirits and souls. It is said, Ps. civ. 4, that God maketh his angels "a flaming fire:" it is the nearest representation that is given of the angelic nature, that abounds both in subtlety and force. Now when Christ saith, Go into those flames of fire, "prepared for the devil and his angels," what is meant? Why the devils themselves are flames of fire: and what fire can be more piercing than themselves, who have power over fire? Yet there is a greater fire than they: "God is a consuming fire;" a fire, so infinitely scorching, as will burn and torment even fire itself. It would be unspeakable, terrible wrath in God, if he should make use of his creatures for the punishment of the damned; who could bear it, if God should only keep a man living forever in the midst of a furnace, though but of a gross, earthly fire and flames? or, if God should bind a man hand and foot; and cast him into a deep pit full of toads, adders, and scorpions; and there let him lie forever? God knows all the several stings, that are in his creatures; and he can take out of them the most sharp and piercing ingredients; the sharpness of the sword, the inflammations of poisons, the scorchings of fire, the anguish of pains, the faintness of diseases; and, of all these, can make a most tormenting composition:

and, if he should make use of this composition, what intolerable anguish would this cause! If, then, creatures can cause such torture, oh! what a dreadful thing is it to fall into the hands of God himself! when God conveys his wrath by creatures, it must needs lose infinitely in the very conveyance of it: it is but as if a giant should strike one with a straw or a feather: so, when God takes up one creature to strike another with, that blow can be but weak; and, yet, how terrible are those weak blows to us! What will it be then, when God shall immediately crush us by the unabated force of his own almighty arm? You, therefore, that persevere in sin, and in security too, consider with whom you have to deal; not with creatures, but with God himself: and do you not fear that uncreated fire, that can wrap you up in the flames of his essential wrath, and burn you forever? "Can thy heart endure, or can thy hands be strong," says God, "in the day that I shall deal with thee?" The very weakness of God is stronger than men. God can look a man to death: the breath of a man's nostrils is a soft and quiet thing; and yet the very breath of God's nostrils can blast the soul, and burn it to a very cinder. Oh! then tremble to think, what wrath his heavy hand can inflict upon thee: that hand, that spreadeth out the heavens, and in the hollow of which he holds the great waters of the sea; that hand of God, in which his great strength lies; oh! what wrath will it inflict upon thee, when it falls upon thee in the full power of his might!

3. *This consuming fire, after it hath once seized upon the soul, is forever unquenchable.*

Indeed thou mayest hinder it from kindling upon thy soul. As when a house is on fire, they use to spout water upon the walls of the neighboring houses, to keep the flames from catching hold of them; so you may, by sprinkling the blood of Jesus Christ, and by moistening yourselves with the tears of true repentance, prevent this consuming fire from preying upon you: but, if once it kindles, it will there burn everlastingly. It is not like your sublunary fires: these spend the matter they feed on; and, be they of never so great force, they must at length themselves starve for want of fuel: yea, the sooner they consume, the sooner are they themselves consumed; as, in straw, and other light combustible matter. But God is such a fire, as consumes without diminishing; and his power is such a power, as destroys the soul, and yet perpetuates it. He is such a wise and intelligent fire, as consumes the damned, and yet repairs them; and, by tormenting, still nourishes them for future torments. As Minutius speaks: the same breath

of God, that destroys the soul, still keeps it alive, that it may be eternal fuel for itself. Hence it is, that hell-fire is described to be such, as shall never be quenched: Mark ix. 44. And why? but because "the breath of the Lord, like a fiery stream," is still kindling it. How in the midst of this devouring fire must the damned dwell, without any period, either to their being or to their torment! And, when they have lain there millions and millions of years, still is it but a beginning of their sorrows, and they are as far from a release and discharge as they were at the first. Think with yourselves, how long and how tedious a little time seems to you when you are in pain: you complain then, that time hath leaden feet, and wish that the days and hours would roll away faster. Oh! what will it be then, when you shall lie in hell; when the intolerableness of pain shall make every hour seem an age, and every year seem a long eternity itself, and yet you must lie an eternity of those years there? This makes their torments doubly everlasting. Methinks, the dreadful thoughts of this eternally consuming fire, should make the stoutest heart to quake; or, at least, to cause a cold fit of fear, before this burning and scorching torment begins.

4. *God is such a consuming fire, as will prey upon the soul, that tender and spiritual part of man.*

The more gross the subject is, the more dull are the pains that it suffers; but, where the subject is spiritual, there the anguish must needs be extreme. The sharpest torments, of which the body is capable, are dull, in comparison with what the soul can feel: when God himself shall lash the soul, that more refined part, all comparisons fall short of expressing the anguish of it: to shoot poisoned darts inflamed into a man's marrow, to rip up his bowels with a sword red hot, is as nothing to this. Think what it is to have a drop of boiling, scalding oil, or melting lead fall into your eye, and make it boil and burn till at last it falls out of your head; such torments, yea infinitely more than this, is it to have the wrath of God fall upon your souls. The body is a kind of fence to the soul: it damps and deadens the smart, as a blow upon a clothed man is not so painful as upon one that is stark naked: now if the soul sometimes feels such smart and pain through the body, what shall it feel when God shall pour his wrath upon it stark naked?

5. *The longer thou livest in thy sins impenitently, the more dost thou prepare thy soul to be fit fuel for this consuming fire to devour.*

This is but like the oiling of a barrel of pitch, which of itself

was apt enough before to burn. Those, whom the wrath of God snatches away in the beginning of their days, are made fuel for that consuming fire: and, if it be done so to the green tree, what will be done to the dry and rotten tree? Thou, that hast stood many years rotting in the world, when God shall come and cut thee down and cast thee into unquenchable fire, how soon wilt thou kindle and how dreadfully wilt thou burn, having no sap left in thee to allay and mitigate those flames! Certainly, would but the most hardened sinner, here present, call his thoughts aside awhile, and seriously bethink himself what he hath been doing ever since he came into the world, this must needs make him fear and tremble; to consider, that, all this time, he hath, by his sinning, been treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, heaping up coals, yea burning coals, upon his own head. Every time you sin, what do you else but cast in another faggot to that pile of much wood, prepared to burn you forever? O, that these dreadful and amazing considerations might, at length, rouse and awaken your hearts to fear this consuming fire; and to tremble at that wrath, that is now kindling in God's breast against you, and which will, if you repent not, ere long kindle upon you!

"But," you will say, "to fear God, only because he is a consuming fire, merely because of his wrath and fiery indignation, is but, at best, a slavish fear: it is but to fear him as the devils do, for they "believe and tremble;" and of what use and benefit will such a fear as this be?"

Ans. 1. It is true, to fear God merely upon the account of wrath is but a slavish fear; but, yet, it is far better to fear God slavishly, than to perish securely.

That will come with redoubled terror, which comes unexpectedly. How intolerable will hell be to those, especially, that never fear it till they feel it! When sinners shall see themselves surrounded with flames of fire, before ever they thought themselves in any danger; when they shall wake with the flames of hell flashing and flaming about them; what "weeping and wailing" will this cause! This is to perish, as a fool perisheth; to go on securely in sin, till unexpectedly a dart suddenly strikes through his liver. Whatever the event be, yet it becomes the reason of a man to be affected with fear, proportionable to the evil to which he lies obnoxious. Therefore, whether this slavish fear ends in torment or not, yet it is more rational to fear those things to which we are exposed, than to be

secure and go down into torments, and never to fear them till we feel them.

Ans. 2. This fear, though a slavish fear, is of great efficacy to deter men from the outward acts of more gross and scandalous sins.

He, that puts hell between him and his sins, will scarce be so daring as to venture through a lake of fire and brimstone to commit them. God thought he had set a sufficient guard upon the tree of life, when he placed "cherubim and a flaming sword" to keep men from it. But, to keep men from sin, he hath placed a guard far more dreadful than angels or a flaming sword: he hath placed himself, "a consuming fire," to deter men from sin; and they, certainly, that have any fear or dread of God upon their hearts, will judge it too hot a work to break through this fire to their lusts. The thoughts of hell and those everlasting torments due to sin, have doubtless been often used with good success to repel Satan's temptations.

Ans. 3. Where the fear of wrath doth prevail to restrain men from sin, this is a good effect; for it doth lessen and mitigate that wrath, that they fear.

On those, that add iniquity to iniquity, without fear, God will heap plague upon plague, without measure. He proportions men's punishments to their sins; and those, that fear most, shall feel least. That fear of theirs, which keeps them from the gross acts of sins into which others boldly rush, shall likewise keep them from the sorest torments that others shall forever suffer.

Ans. 4. This slavish fear is introductory: that is, it is preparatory to and inductive of a filial and holy fear of God.

We usually fear God, first, as a revenging judge; before we come to fear him with a reverential, filial fear, as a reconciled Father. As the poet of old fabulously fancied, that the giants heaped mountain upon mountain, that they might scale heaven: this is true in Christianity: the way to climb heaven, is, by laying one mountain upon another, even Mount Sion upon Mount Sinai. Those, commonly, prove the most stable and stayed Christians, that have been most harassed by legal terrors, before they enjoyed the sense of comfort; for the structure of grace in the heart is quite contrary to other buildings: it stands firmest, when it is laid upon a shaking and trembling foundation: it is a seed, that never thrives so well, as where the heart is most broken up, and wherein the wrath of God hath made long and deep furrows.

To conclude this, methinks what hath already been spoken

should fill the heart of every carnal wretch with fear; methinks this should make him cry out, with those sinners in Sion, Isa. xxxiii. 14. "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" Can the drunkard hear these things, and yet put his intemperate cups to his mouth with a steady hand? Can the swearer hear these things, and yet his tongue move steady in his mouth, and not tremble when he raps out oaths? Certainly, how secure and confident soever men may now be; yet there is a time coming, when the wrath of God shall melt down their hearts like wax, in the midst of their bowels. Death is a thundering preacher; and it will make you fear the dreadful representations of that fiery indignation, that shortly it will display before your eyes in all its terrors. O! when your eyes shall swim in the night and in the dark, and it cannot be long first, when you shall meet with those dreadful shapes and visions of a flaming hell and a more flaming God, it will be too late then to fear; and, alas! it will be too late then to hope: God will then laugh at your calamity; and mock at you, when this unseasonable fear cometh. Be persuaded, therefore, to entertain a fear of God, at last; though but a slavish fear: this is the preparation, that the Holy Ghost works in the heart, in order to a filial and a holy fear of God.

Use ii. Another use, that we may make of this point, is this: IF GOD BE A CONSUMING FIRE, HOW HIGHLY DOTH IT CONCERN US TO LOOK OUT FOR A SCREEN, THAT MAY FENCE US FROM THOSE EVERLASTING BURNINGS!

We are stubble and fuel, fully prepared: our sins have made us so: and, for us to stand it out against God, is no other than for dried stubble to challenge the devouring fire.

Now God, that he might not break forth upon us and destroy us, hath himself prepared a screen to hide and shelter us from this flaming wrath; and that is Christ, the Mediator. We have a lively type of this in Aaron: Numb. xvi. 48, when the rebellious Israelites mutinied against Moses, God did suddenly break forth upon them, and slew almost fifteen thousand of them dead upon the place. As fire runs on a train of powder, so did this wrath of God pass swiftly from one to another, till Aaron interposed and stopped it: there stood that mighty priest, as a bulwark between the living and the dead, and intercepted the rest from this destroying wrath; and, though it overwhelmed so many thousands, yet it could not bear down his powerful intercession: he alone was the fence and

safeguard of a perishing people. Christ, upon the cross, maintains the same station; interposing betwixt the living and the dead; the wrath of God consumes all before it, that is not under the protection of that screen: there, it stops; and, though it seized fiercely upon him too, yet it never burnt through him to reach those that fled for security to that refuge set before them. In a general conflagration, even chaff and stubble may be secure, under the covert of an adamantine wall: though all the wicked of the world shall burn together, and all believers be in themselves as combustible matter as they; yet Christ interposeth as a wall of adamant between stubble and stubble, and, when the wrath of God hath consumed the one, he stands and keeps off the impressions of it from the other. Indeed, there is a wall, that stands between God and every wicked man; but it is a "wall of partition," as the Apostle calls it, Eph. ii. 14, it is a wall, that separates them from the love and favor of God, and hides his face from them: a partition of dry and rotten boards may keep off the light and kindly influences of the sun; but it is no fence against the rage of fire, but rather increases and augments it: so, wicked men are separated from the love and favor of God by their sins; Isa. lix. 2. "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God;" yea, and they keep off his cherishing influences, but they contribute to his fiery wrath. Now Christ is a wall of defence, that separates his from the wrath and indignation of God. A wall of crystal is a safe defence against the force of fire, yet is it no obstruction to the warm beams and cherishing light of the sun: such a crystal wall is Christ, that keeps off God's fiery indignation from us, but yet conveys to us the cherishing and reviving influences of his love.

Let me now persuade and prevail with you to betake yourselves to this shelter. The same storm of fire and brimstone, that destroyed Sodom, hovers over all the wicked of the world; and we are as Lot, still lingering behind: let me therefore hasten you, as the angel did him, to your Zoar; to get under the protection of Christ, whither the fiery indignation of God cannot pursue you. In the former instance, when the Israelites saw so many of their fellows slain by an unperceived stroke, what running and crowding, was there, think you, to get behind the priest! We are all in the same danger, but we have a more prevalent High Priest: there are thousands dying and perishing under the wrath of God; and shall not we then, with fear and trembling, press close behind our High Priest, that by him we may be hid from this consuming fire?

USE iii. The next use shall be, TO EXHORT YOU TO A HOLY FEAR AND REVERENCE OF THIS GREAT AND TERRIBLE GOD.

I lately gave you several considerations, enough to daunt the boldest sinners, and to bring them at least to a slavish fear; be persuaded now to advance it a degree higher, and to overawe your hearts, with a holy, filial fear of God. It is the same exhortation that Solomon gives us, Prov. xxiii. 17: "Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long." This is a true Christian's frame; when, in all the affairs and actions of our lives, in what company soever we are, or whatever we are doing, the fear of God is still upon us; when, in all our converse in the world, this fear of God doth still fill and possess our hearts.

I shall only give you a few particulars, and leave them to your serious consideration.

1. This holy fear of God *will keep you from a vain and frothy spirit.*

The heart of man is the great receptacle of thoughts. The most of them are light and feathery: they fly up and down as thick, and to as little purpose, as moats in a sunbeam. It is strange to observe, what a giddy thing the mind of man is: as an empty vessel rolls to and fro, and is tossed up and down by every wave, never sailing steadily; so is the vain mind of man driven by every foolish and impertinent thought, till the fear of God, that is, the ballast of the soul, poise it and make its course steady and even. Certainly, if any thing be of force to compose the heart into a sober, serious frame, it is the consideration of God's great and dreadful majesty: the fear of which will fill us with noble and substantial thoughts, how we may escape his wrath, and how we may secure to ourselves eternal happiness. These are important thoughts: and they ought to be our great and only care: that so we may approve ourselves to God; and be, at the last day, found of him in well-doing. Before the heart is ballasted with this fear of God, it runs after every vagrant thought, that comes across us or fleets before us; as children run after every feather, that the wind drives: but the fear of God fixes this fleetiness, and brings the heart to a holy consistency and solidity in its thoughts. It is this fear that uniteth the heart: and therefore David prays, Ps. lxxxvi. 11: "Unite my heart to fear thy name."

2. The fear of God *is an excellent preservative against all sin.*

Slavish fear may keep wicked men from committing gross and flagitious crimes: but this holy fear overawes the heart from secret and hidden sins; yea, from the sins of the heart, that none can see,

but only God and a man's own conscience: and therefore it is said, Ps. xix. 9: "The fear of the Lord is clean:" that is, it keeps the soul clean from the defilement of sin. There are defilements of two sorts: defilements of the flesh, when men wallow in gross and sensual sins; and defilements also of the spirit, and such are they that reside in the heart, and break not forth into outward act. From both these the fear of God cleanseth us. So in 2 Cor. vii. 1: "Let us cleanse ourselves," says the Apostle, "from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." And, indeed, wherever the fear of God is implanted, it will overawe us, as well from offending God in our thoughts as in our actions; and make us, that we shall be as afraid of sinning against him by unbelief and impenitence, as by murder and blasphemy.

3. This holy fear of God *is a most sovereign preservative against hypocrisy.*

What is hypocrisy, but mocking God to his face? It is a design to put a solemn cheat upon God. Certainly, where the fear of God overawes the heart, we shall not dare to abuse his holy and reverend name, as hypocrites do, in their making mention of him. When we speak of him with our lips, but never think of him with our hearts, this is to abuse the holy and reverend name of God; and it is a sure argument that they stand in no dread of God, whose hearts meditate vanity with eyes and hands lifted up to heaven. Will any dare, in the presence of a prince, while they pretend reverence to him, to use antic gestures? Would not this justly be interpreted a contempt of him? Why all the religious gestures of hypocrites are but antic; and, while they move their lips in prayer without the corresponding motion of the heart, they do but make mouths at God; and how can they fear him, that are thus audacious to scoff at him? Yea, the Scripture sets it down as a remarkable matter, when hypocrites begin to fear God: Isa. xxxiii. 13, 14; 'Hear ye.....and acknowledge my might," says God. Why? "The sinners in Zion are afraid: fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites." It is much easier to terrify and daunt profligate sinners, than gross hypocrites; because hypocrites, by often dallying with God, wear off all sense and dread of God, and arrive at length to a plain contempt and scorn of him. If therefore you would, in every duty, approve your hearts in sincerity unto God, nourish in you this holy fear of his majesty. This fear is that, which makes a Christian single-hearted. And, as the Apostle commands servants, Col. iii. 22, to obey their masters not "as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:" so, where this holy fear of God pos-

sesseth the soul, it will cause all our obedience to be performed in the singleness and integrity of our hearts; not so much to be seen of men, as to be accepted of God. It is a remarkable place, in Josh. xxiv. 14; "Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity:" the fear of God is of a mighty influence to sincerity, in all our services and performances that we render unto God: it is that, which will make the heart sincere in them: fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity.

4. This holy fear *will put us upon all endeavors to please God, and to gain favor with him.*

This is the most natural effect of fear, to engage us to procure their love, whose power we dread. The devil knew no such way to get himself worship and adoration, as by terrifying the old heathen. And, still, he useth the same artifice in those parts of the world, where his kingdom yet remains: he appears in dreadful shapes, and terrifies them, on purpose that he may extort from them a blind, superstitious worship. So, where the soul is affected with a holy fear of God, it will engage it to please him, and to avoid whatever may kindle his anger: and therefore says the Apostle, 2 Cor. v. 9, 10; "We labor, that.....we may be accepted of him:" And why so? Yes, says he, for we must be judged by him: the fear of being judged by God, at the tribunal of Christ, at the last day, engaged the Apostle to labor to please God and to be accepted by him.

5. The fear of God *is an excellent corrective of the base and unworthy fear of men.*

Our Saviour says, Luke xii. 4, 5; "Be not afraid of them, that kill the body; and, after that, have no more that they can do. But....fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell: yea, I say unto you, fear him." It is well observed by a learned author, that men may be considered, as they bear upon them some resemblance and impress of the Divine Majesty; as they are invested with authority and power, and constituted magistrates and rulers over us: this resemblance is so great, that the Scripture styles them *gods:* "I have said ye are Gods;" and, so, we are to fear them with a fear of reverence and obedience, and to obey them in that which is lawful. And they may be considered also as standing in opposition to God: abusing their power by commanding things that are unlawful, and by persecution endeavoring to terrify men from the ways and service of God: and, so, they may be feared with a fear of flight and avoidance. When ye are persecuted "in one city, flee ye into another:" Mat. x. 23. We

may so fear them, as to labor to avoid their rage, and to consult our own safety. But the fear, that is here forbidden, is, "Fear not them that kill the body:" that is, with a distrustful, perverting fear: such a fear, as causeth men, for the securing of their temporal life, to desert the profession and practice of godliness: with such a fear, fear not men. He will not, that truly fears God, thus fear men. No; the fear of God lays a check upon the sinful fear of men. He, that truly fears God, will not immoderately fear men: for it is the property of holy fear to represent the displeasure of God, as an infinitely greater evil than the loss of estate, liberty, nay of life itself, or whatever the rage and power of man can either inflict or threaten: and this makes them choose affliction, rather than sin. See this fearless spirit in those three heroic champions, Dan. iii. 16, who though they saw "a burning, fiery furnace" before them, into which they were threatened to be cast; yet all the terrors of it did not fright them to an idolatrous worship: with what a holy contempt and slighting did they answer king Nebuchadnezzar! "We are not careful," say they, "to answer thee in this matter:" and whence proceeded this undaunted courage, but only because they were more afraid of God, who is "a consuming fire," than they were of a fiery furnace? A man, that truly fears God, computes with himself, that to gain the favor of men with the displeasure of God, to redeem a temporal life by an eternal death, is the most foolish bargain that can be made. He knows the rage of man is under the restraint of God, and that a hair of his head shall not fall to the ground without his heavenly Father's knowledge and permission; and, if God doth suffer wicked men to inflict the utmost that their rage and spite can inspire, yet it reacheth only the earthly part, the dull part of man, the body. They may persecute, torment, and kill us; but yet they cannot hurt us: one momentary gripe of hell's torments is infinitely more intolerable, than all the cruelties that men can possibly invent or inflict: one frown from an angry God hath more dread and terror in it, than all the rage and threatenings of the most barbarous and cruel tyrants. And that Christian, that makes such an account as this, can never certainly so fear torment or death, as to be drawn to sin against God, whose displeasure he more fears than he fears either torment or death.

Now, to shut up this whole subject, I shall only mention a few particulars to you, whereby you may take a brief view of what there is in the nature of God, that may justly affect us with a holy fear and awe of him.

First. The consideration of God's glorious majesty may strike us into a holy dread and terror.

And, therefore, says Elihu, (Job xxxvii. 22,) "With God is terrible majesty." This is that, which daunts the holy angels in heaven: they cover their faces with their wings: as not being able to bear the piercing rays of that glory, wherewith he is clothed. An earthly prince, when he is set forth in the royalty and grandeur of his state, casts an awe upon those that approach near him: and how much more ought we to fear the great and glorious Majesty of Heaven, who is always clad "with light as with a garment!" that light, which no mortal eye can approach, being always surrounded with an innumerable host of glittering attendants, each of which maintains more pomp and state than the greatest potentate on earth.

Secondly. God's almighty power should cause us to fear before him.

He is the incontrolable sovereign of all the world; to whose beck all things in heaven and in earth, yea and in hell too, are subject. And, therefore, says Bildad, (Job xxv. 2.) "Dominion and fear are with him:" not that God hath any fear, or stands in fear; but the dominion and sovereignty of God cause fear: it strikes the heart with an awful fear, when we consider that dominion and fear are with God. That power and authority of God, by which he exerciseth his dominion, causeth a fear of him.

Thirdly. The severe and impartial justice of God, whereby he renders to every one according to his works, should kindle in us a holy fear of God.

So the Apostle, 2 Cor. v. 10, 11: "We must receive," says he, "according to what we have done in the body." Whence he infers, that, "knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." It is terrible to receive from God's justice, according to what we have done in the body.

Fourthly. The consideration of God's omnipresence and omni science, may cause in us a holy fear of him.

His eye is always upon us: his presence is always with us, wherever we are; and he sees and observes whatever we do. And, therefore, let us fear him: his eye is awful.

Fifthly. The consideration of our absolute dependence upon God, should cause us to stand in fear of him: lest, by provoking him, who maintains our souls in life; in whom we live, and move, and have our being; in whose hands are our breath, our life, and all our ways; he should turn his hand upon us, and deprive us of all those mercies and comforts that now he heaps upon us.

ON

# GLORIFYING GOD IN HIS ATTRIBUTES.

*Ye are not your own: for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.* 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

Without any more curious division, we may take notice of three parts in these words; viz., a doctrine, a reason and a use.

The doctrine is, "Ye are not your own."

The reason of it, "for ye are bought with a price."

The use, which is strongly inferred from both these, and is indeed the most natural and genuine result of the doctrine of our redemption purchased by Christ, "therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

It is this last, on which I principally intend to insist; as that, unto which both the former parts refer, and in which they center. Yet I shall not altogether wave the former branches; but more briefly represent what they administer to us, either of instruction or direction.

I. To begin with the PROPOSITION, "Ye are not your own."

i. And, here, two things must fall under our disquisition:

What this phrase implies, and what significance it carries in itself.

What it infers, and what obligation it lays upon us.

1. For the *import of this phrase*, "Ye are not your own," because it is a negative proposition, and all negatives are measured by their contrary affirmatives, we shall best conceive it, if we first rightly state, what it is for any essence to be its own.

(1) Certain it is, that no being can be said to be simply its own, but what is supreme, absolute, and independent.

For, if its being be derived from any superior cause, it holds it only upon courtesy. And, as we cannot strictly call that our own, which is but lent unto us; so neither are our nature and being our own, which are but bestowed upon us by the bounty of another, maintained by his continual influence, and subjected to his sovereign control and dominion. A being, then, that is its own, must

not be dependent on, or beholden to any other; nor acknowledge any thing superior to it, from which it hath received, or to which it is indebted.

(2) That essence, which is its own, must be itself the end of all its actions.

The first efficient must, of necessity, be the last end: and, therefore, whatsoever can direct any of its actions to an end higher and more ultimate than itself, is not the first cause, but a dependent and secondary one. It is impossible that any creature should be made for itself only; to seek and serve itself: for, since every agent is excited to his operations by some end which he propoundeth to himself, if the creature were its own utmost end, the Creator could have no end at all in forming him, and consequently would never do it. Hence Solomon tells us, Prov. xvi. 4, that "the Lord hath made all things for himself." And, indeed, he, who is the great architect of the world, "the maker of all things visible and invisible," can fix no other end in any of his works, but himself, and his own glory.

(3) And, from these two principles, it evidently follows, that there is no being simply its own, but that, which is the first cause and the last end of all beings: and that is God.

He only is his own: all other things are of him, and for him: they are all derivative from him, dependent upon him, and subordinate unto him; and, therefore, they are not their own.

[1] They are all derivative beings: and flow from the first source and fountain of being, even God himself.

Before the creation of the world, all was an infinite God, and an infinite nothing. But, his goodness delighting to communicate itself, he designs a numberless variety of creatures: and, by his almighty word, impregnates the womb of this great nothing, and makes it fruitful; causing all things to start up in the same form and order, which he had before conceived in the eternal ideas of his own mind. Now, since all things are by participation from the first cause, and all their perfections are but faint strictures and glimmering resemblances of his, it is most unreasonable that those should belong to themselves, who were made by another; and that, they should be their own, who, without his influence and efficacy, had still been nothing.

[2] All other beings are dependent, and owe their continued preservation to the goodness and powerful influx of God.

Indeed, preservation is nothing else, but a prolonged production. For, as we see the light of the sun preserved in the air, by

a constant emanation that it hath from the sun; and that, as bright and glorious a creature as it is, yet it cannot subsist one moment upon its own succors; and that there needs nothing else to blot it out of our hemisphere, and to involve all in night and darkness, but only the sun's withdrawing itself: so is it with us, in respect to God. We depend upon him, as necessarily as the light depends upon the sun: he is the fountain of our life and being: the continuance of it, thus long, is by a continual emanation and streaming of it forth from him: should he withdraw his preserving influence from us, we should instantly dissolve, and fall all abroad into nothing. And, therefore, it were insupportable arrogance for us to think ourselves our own; who are what we are by his creating power, and while we are by his preserving influence.

[3] All other beings are subordinate to the first; made for his ends and uses, and to be employed in his service.

Never had there been any such thing as a world and creatures in it, but that the all-wise God intended them all as the instruments of promoting his glory. And this they all do. Some, indeed, only objectively; as brute and inanimate creatures, by exhibiting the prints and footsteps of the power, and wisdom, and being of their almighty Creator: and, therefore, the Psalmist tells us, that "the heavens declare the glory of God;" Ps. xix. 1, that is, the beauty, splendor, and harmony of that most excellent piece of the creation, do evidently demonstrate the infinite wisdom, power, and majesty of the great architect; who hath framed such a glorious roof for our house here on earth, and so glorious a pavement for his own in heaven. But, because glory requires celebration, therefore God hath created other ranks of rational and intellectual beings, who might actively serve and glorify him; and, by taking notice of his attributes, so conspicuously shining forth in the works of creation and providence, ascribe unto him the praise that is due unto his name for such his wonderful works: and these are angels and men; both which he made for himself, in a more especial and peculiar manner; communicating to them more exalted perfections, and more express resemblances of his divine attributes, than to other inferior things. And, although endless multitudes of these have, by their apostasy and rebellion, defeated the primary end of their creation, refusing to glorify God actively: yet God will certainly fetch his glory out of them; and, that they may not be made in vain, will glorify himself upon them passively, in inflicting that wrath and vengeance, that shall make him known and revered as an infinitely just and jealous God:

though they transgress the law of their own natures, yet they cannot transgress the law of the Divine providence: God will make them serve to the promoting of his glory; if not voluntarily, as the vessels of his mercy, yet by constraint and a sad necessity, as the objects of his wrath and fury. And thus Solomon tells us, that God "hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil:" and so, likewise, in that doxology of the elders, Rev. iv. 11. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created:" and therefore, certainly, if all things were created for God as their highest and ultimate end, all things are his, and not their own; and the right and title to them is in him, by whom and for whom they were made.

And thus you see the import of this phrase, "Ye are not your own:" that is, you are not supreme, absolute, independent beings, left only to your own ways and wills; but ye are God's; created, supported, and governed by him, and accountable to him for all your actions.

Indeed the Apostle, in the text, gives us another reason why we are not our own: and that is, upon the account of our redemption by Christ: "Ye are not your own: for ye are bought with a price." Redemption gives him as much, if not a greater title to you, than creation: for it was not so considerable an effect of the divine power and goodness, to create, as to redeem you; the one was but the expense of his breath; the other is the expense of his blood. But, because this falls in with the second part of the text, I shall at present wave it, reserving it to its proper place.

Briefly, therefore, when the Apostle saith, "Ye are not your own," it is as much as if he had said, "You have no right nor title to yourselves: ye are not your own proprietors, nor to look upon yourselves as lords over your own beings. There is another Lord, to whom ye appertain; and that is God: whose right you infinitely wrong, if you acknowledge not yourselves to be his inheritance and possession." Indeed it is a sacrilegious invading of the divine prerogative, for any creature to pretend to be its own, or to live as though it were so. This is no less, than impiously to ascribe an all-sufficiency to itself.

2. Let us consider *what it infers, and what obligation it lays upon us.*

And this I shall endeavor to show you, in these following corollaries.

(1) If we are not our own, then certainly we ought not to seek our own.

Self-seeking is the very bane of Christianity. It is that worm, that lies at the root, and eats out the very life and sap of it. A self-seeking Christian is a downright contradiction, an absurdity in religion: for the very first lesson, that Christ teaches in his school, is that hard one of self-denial; and our Saviour hath told us, that whosoever refuseth to "deny himself," and to "take up his cross," cannot be his disciple.

But, as there is in every Christian a twofold self: a spiritual, heaven-born self, the new man, the divine nature, the impress and stamp of the image of God upon the soul, consisting in the sanctifying principles both of knowledge and holiness, and all the habits of special grace infused into us by the Holy Ghost in our first conversion: and, likewise, an earthy, dreggy, and inferior self, the utmost tendency of which is only to satisfy the sensual part of man, and all its good things are only such as the world and its stock can furnish it withal: as, I say, there is this twofold self in every true Christian, so must we distinguish likewise a twofold self-seeking.

[1] There is a seeking of those things, which are grateful and pleasing to the spiritual self of a good Christian: those, which may promote its interests and concerns, and make it flourishing and vigorous to us.

And this is a self-seeking so far from being condemned, that it is our highest praise and glory.

The tendency of the new nature is towards two things:

The increase of grace in us, here; and

The participation of glory, hereafter.

For the first, all grant that we ought to labor.

But, for the second, some have been so weak as to doubt, whether we might make the eternal glory and happiness of our souls the end of our duties and endeavors: and, with many high-flown inconsistencies, that seem to have in them much of spiritual rapture, but indeed are nothing else but idle dreams and false delusions, tell us that we must serve and obey God only out of love and gratitude, neither for hope of reward, nor fear of punishment; and condemn all that obedience, which respects these, as sordid and mercenary, unworthy of the true and generous spirit of the gospel. But, if we should tell these men, that they pretend to a greater

degree of spirituality than ever Moses did, possibly their pride and self-conceit would make them assume it: for, alas! Moses was but a poor old testament saint, and we read of him, Heb. xi. 26, that "he had respect unto the recompense of the reward:" but, though they think themselves more spiritual than he, what! are they likewise more spiritual than St. Paul? And yet he tells us, Phil. iii. 13, 14; that he reached "forth unto those things, which are before," pressing "toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus?" Or have they attained to an elevation of spirituality beyond our Lord Jesus Christ himself, of whom the Apostle witnesseth, Heb. xii. 2, that, "for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross despising the shame?" It is allowable, therefore, yea it is necessary to be selfish; to consider our own interest and our own advantage, in this case: for, since our very nature is so tempered, that the two great advantages which we have to quicken it, are hopes and fears, I shall very much doubt that those will prove but slothful and negligent Christians, who shall, out of a fond conceit of greater spirituality and perfection, lay these spurs aside: and pretend to make use of other arguments, which, though they seem more specious, yet, I am sure, must needs be less effectual.

Others again, who do allow that our obedience may be directed unto God, with an eye and respect unto the reward which he hath promised us, yet question whether we ought *chiefly* and *principally* to regard our own happiness or his honor, our own glory or his. I answer: this is but a nice and needless scruple: and, though many infirm and tender spirits may be much puzzled in directing their obedience, yet this solicitude is but vain; for, whilst they do either, they do both: for what is the glory of God's grace and mercy? Is it not the accomplishment of our salvation? And therefore, certainly, whilst I endeavor to promote mine own salvation, I do as much endeavor to promote the glory of God: although, perhaps, in every duty I do it not with a distinct particular act of reflection; yet, so long as I endeavor to promote my own salvation, I do implicitly and interpretatively endeavor the advancement of God's glory; for that is the next and immediate means to this: we need not, therefore, be anxious, whether we seek ourselves, or the honor of God; for, in thus seeking ourselves, we do nothing else but seek his honor and glory. Let us again consider what is our happiness and felicity: our objective happiness, is the infinite and boundless good, even God himself; our formal happiness, is our clear vision and full fruition of him, and the near conjunction of our souls unto him by love and inherence: now,

certainly, his infinite goodness will never reject those duties as sordid and mercenary, that aspire to no greater, no other reward but the enjoyment of himself: in thus seeking ourselves, we seek God; and, the more intensely we thus love our own souls the more supremely do we love God, while we breathe and pant after the fruition of him with the holy impatience of an amorous spirit: in this sense, therefore, although we are not our own, yet we may seek our own: we appertain not to ourselves, but to God; yet certainly when this self which we seek hath God for its object and end, we seek him in seeking of ourselves.

[2] There is a seeking of those things, which are only conducible to the ease, profit, and advantage of the natural and earthly self.

And these St. John hath briefly summed up in three things: "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life;" which is but to tell us more enigmatically, that they are pleasures, riches, and honors. Self is the center of all the actions of a worldly man: and, whatsoever he doth are but so many lines, which, though they may seem far distant from one another, yet all meet together there.

Indeed, there is a seeking of these worldly advantages, which is not justly to be branded with this black mark of self-seeking; and that is,

1st. When we seek them only by lawful means.

As industry in our callings, and prayer to God for a blessing upon it; detesting all the wicked and base methods of fraud and deceit.

2dly. When we seek them with due moderation.

When our care about them is but prudent and provident; not carking, nor distracting.

3dly. When we seek them at allowed seasons.

The shop must not intrench upon either the church or the closet; nor the duties of our particular callings, as we are men, devour the duties of our general callings, as Christians. Both are beautiful in their season: and, indeed, the one is an excellent preparative for the other. How comfortably may that man follow his vocation all day, who hath begun the morning with God, and humbly implored his blessing and assistance! And how sweetly may that man close up his day's task with prayer, who hath used such care and conscientiousness in his calling, as to bring no new guilt to confess in the evening!

4thly. When we seek these things with a due subordination to the higher and more noble ends of piety and holiness. As,

(1st) When we seek them, that we may avoid those temptations unto which possibly the want of them might expose us.

Thus Agur prays to God, Prov. xxx. 8: "Feed me with food convenient for me;.....lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain:" that is, as I conceive, lest he should be, first, tempted to theft; and, then, to perjury to conceal it, if suspected.

(2dly) When we seek them, that we may be the better furnished for good works.

For earthly comforts and enjoyments, if they be well improved, are excellent instruments to promote the glory of God, in furthering the good and welfare of others. Hence the Apostle, Eph. iv. 28: "Let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." And indeed it will require somewhat of a plentiful estate, to be able "to maintain good works," as the Apostle twice useth that expression, Titus iii. 8, and at the 14th verse.

If these rules be duly observed, he is no self-seeker, who diligently may seek after these temporal accommodations.

But, when gain shall be preferred before godliness; and all the crooked ways of deceit and fraud made use of, only to amass together a heap of ill-gotten trash: when thou wilt rather choose to make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, than to cast overboard any part of thy wealth, though it be to save thy soul from being drowned and sunk in perdition: when this golden idol shall be set up by thee; and God, and Christ, and religion, and conscience, all sacrificed unto it: what is this, but a base self-seeking, unworthy of a Christian, nay of a man? Too impious this for a Christian, too foolish for any man: for, in thus seeking themselves, they lose themselves forever. And this is that, of which the Apostle so grievously complains, Phil. ii. 21; "All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." A mean and sordid temper this. And, as it is sordid; so is it, likewise, most unjust and unreasonable: for consider, you are not your own, but God's: he hath manifold titles to you: you have no self of your own, but you, and all, are his: and what presumption is it for you to provide for what is his, otherwise than he hath ordered; yea, contrary to his express command!

(2) If we are not our own, we may infer, that certainly we are not at our own disposal.

And this should teach us patience in all the cross and sad occur-

rences of our lives. We are not our own; and, therefore, we may not carve out our own condition to ourselves, nor prescribe to God what we would have done, or what we would avoid; for this is boldly to intermeddle with that, which doth not belong to us. Thou art God's; and what is it to thee, O busy man, what he doth with his own? If it seemeth good to him to chastise thee with poverty, reproach, pains, and diseases, or to take from thee any of thy dearest and most desirable comforts, what hast thou to do to interpose with thy complaints and murmurings? May he not do what he will with his own? Thou art no farther interested in any of these things, than to bear them meekly as a Christian; and voluntarily to resign thyself unto him, unto whom thou dost naturally and necessarily belong.

(3) If we are not our own, we may very rationally infer, that we ought not to follow our own wills and our own affections.

Indeed, the great contest between God and man ever was, and still is, about sovereignty. It hath been the perpetual quarrel of all ages, which shall be the chief; and whose will shall take place, either his or ours. The first crafty temptation, "Ye shall be as gods," hath strangely prevailed upon us ever since: we would fain all be gods, independent and incontrollable. Now check this rebellion of thy will and affections, by considering that thou art not thine own, but God's: he hath the supreme right to thee; and thou art injurious to his right, if thou settest up thy will a competitor with his. Yea, indeed, thou oughtest to have no will peculiar to thyself, but it should be all melted down and resolved into God's. And, therefore, the Apostle puts an excellent form of words into our mouths: James iv. 15; "If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that." So say thou, "If the Lord will, I will." Bring thy will to conform unto his will of precept, absolutely; for that he hath made known unto thee in his word: and neither will nor desire what he hath therein forbidden thee. Bring it also to conform unto his will of purpose, conditionally; for that is hidden and secret to us, until the event declare it: but, when God hath manifested it by the effects, bend thy will unto it; and quietly acquiesce in all his dispensations, as infinitely wise and gracious. Say thou unto him, "Lord, I am blind and ignorant; and cannot see through the consequences of things. That, which I apprehend at present would be for my advantage, may possibly prove a snare and a curse unto me. Thou comprehendest all, in thy infinite wisdom; and, therefore, I resign my choice to thee. Do thou, Lord, choose for me: and, howsoever thy providence shall order

my affairs, make me as thankful for disappointments, as I ought to be for successes." This is a right, Christian temper; worthy of him, who acknowledgeth himself, not to be his own, but God's.

(4) "Ye are not your own;" look not then upon any thing as your own.

Certainly, if thou thyself art God's, whatsoever thou fondly accountest thine is much more his. Shall the principal be his, and not the accessaries? Thy friends, thy children, thy estate, thy good name, are not indeed thine: and, though common words and language call them so: yet take heed that thou dost not lay any emphasis upon it. Thus Nabal, that blunt churl, accents his selfishness: 1 Sam. xxv. 11; "Shall I take my bread and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shepherds?" Alas! poor wretch, there is nothing of all this thine: nay, thou thyself art not thine, but belongest, if not to the grace, yet to the dominion of God. Indeed we must distinguish between things being ours for our good and benefit, and being ours as to absolute title and dominion. Neither way can a wicked man call any thing his: his table is a snare; and that, which should have been for his welfare, is become a curse unto him. But it is not thus with the godly: for the Apostle tells us, 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23, "whether.....the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are theirs; and they are Christ's; and Christ is God's." This argument is very cogent, as to the benefit and good, that shall redound unto them from every thing they enjoy: in this sense, all is theirs, because they are God's. But, because they are God's, therefore nothing is theirs as to absolute right and sovereign dominion. Both they and wicked men have a natural right to many blessings, and a civil right to many more: but neither of them have a supreme, free, and independent right, to any thing which they enjoy; but all is God's, lent to them for their use and his service.

(5) "Ye are not your own;" let not then any sin be your own.

You are God's peculiar people; let not any sin be your peculiar sin. Shall we ourselves be God's, and yet any sin be ours? What is this less than, by a kind of practical blasphemy, to transfer our sins upon God?

Thus have we considered the proposition, "Ye are not your own." Ye have not a sovereign right over your own beings, to seek your own interests, to dispose of your own affairs, to follow your own wills and appetites; but you entirely belong unto another.

ii. And, lest we should be put to seek for an owner, since we are thus denied, and, as it were, turned out of the possession of ourselves, the Apostle informs us WHO IT IS, THAT LAYS IN HIS CLAIM TO US; even the great and universal Lord both of heaven and earth, whose all things are by a most absolute and indisputable right: we are God's.

1. *We are his, as he is Almighty Creator.*

When we laid huddled up in the great chaos and confusion of mere possibilities, he beckoned and called us forth: bade us be, and take our place and station in the order of things: and that, not in a vile and contemptible nature, a worm, or a fly, which we crush or sport to death; but a man, one of the peers and nobles of the world. See how magnificently David speaks of our original: Ps. viii. 5, 6; "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands." Thou, O man, art born a king; crowned, in thy very cradle: and thy being, in the scale of creatures, is but one round lower than that of the angels.

The body, which is the basest and most disgraceful part we have, yet of how excellent a texture and frame is it! Such various springs of motion, such secret channels and conveyances for life and spirits, such a subserviency of parts one to another in their mutual offices, and such a perfect beauty and harmony in the whole, that David might well say, Ps. cxxxix. 14, 15; "I am fearfully and wonderfully made.....and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth." Yea, not only a David, but Galen, a heathen, when he had minutely inspected the admirable artifice that appeared in the frame of our bodies, the structure and use of the several parts, and the many wonders and miracles that were woven up in every one of them, his speculation of nature led him to adore the God of nature, and he could not forbear composing a hymn in the praise of our all-wise Creator. Now whose is this elegant piece of workmanship, but God's? "In thy book," saith the Psalmist, "were all my members written, which in continuance were fashioned:" as architects do usually draw a model of those buildings, which they intend for more than ordinary state and magnificence, before they erect them; so God doth, as it were, delineate a draught and platform of man in his book, that is, in his own counsel and decree; and limns out every member, giving it its shape and proportion in his own ideas; and afterward, according to that perfect pattern, sets up the frame: he first makes the materials, and then brings them

together; and causes all nature to contribute what is most fit and proper for it.

And yet these bodies, though they have so much cost and care bestowed upon them, are but a case and covering for the soul. That is perfectly spiritual; and hath no other cause of its being, but only that God, who is "the Father of spirits." It is a spark, kindled immediately by his own breath: not formed out of any pre-existent matter, as corporeal beings are; but created out of pure and unmixed nothing, by the same almighty word, that spake out angels, and all the glorious hosts of heaven, and made them emerge into being. And when the body is sufficiently furnished with all the organs and instruments necessary for the function of life, then God bestows a soul upon it. Not as if the soul did pre-exist before its union; but it is created in that very instant when it is united to the body. And this is the meaning of that known maxim of St. Augustin, *Creando infunditur, et infundendo creatur:* "It is created in infusing, and infused in creating."

Since, then, God hath created us; and chosen us, out of the infinite number of things possible, to bestow an actual being upon us: since, if he had so pleased, we might have been as much nothing to all eternity, as we were from all eternity; and might have lain hid in that vast crowd and multitude of souls, which might have been, but never shall be; only, God hath been pleased to lay the ideas of them aside, and to pick and cull us out to be his creatures, to prepare us such exquisite bodies, and to breathe into us such rational and intellectual spirits: shall we not with all thankfulness acknowledge, that we appertain unto him, who without him should have continued a long and endless nothing? Hath not he, who created us, an absolute and sovereign right to do to us and to require from us, whatsoever pleaseth him? Thus the Psalmist infers it: Ps. c. 3; "It is he, that hath made us, and not we ourselves;" and therefore it follows, "we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture."

2. *We are his, upon the account of preservation*

He still maintains those beings, which at first he made; and exerts the same almighty power to continue thee in thy being, as at first he did in producing it. Every new moment that passeth over thee, thou art, as it were, again created; brought out of nothing: for all that part of thy life, which is already passed, is become a mere nothing. So that, whether thou lookest to the time that is before thee, or to that which is behind thee; yet. still, thou flowest along, from that which is nothing, to that which is nothing:

and yet, still, thou thyself art preserved in being, and art not swallowed up in the same nothing, that yesterday or the last year are dissolved into. To whom owest thou this, but only to that God who is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever?" He makes all the differences of time in thy age, in whom time itself makes no difference. It is his visitation, as Job speaks, that preserves our spirits: Job x. 12: nor can we subsist one breath, or one pulse, nor one moment longer, than he is pleased to wind off our time to us, from that great ball of eternity which he holds in his own hand. If thou canst find out any one such day or hour, wherein thou canst maintain thyself, without any charge to God or dependence upon him; if thou canst either live, or move, or be, without the continual influence of the divine power and providence; then, for that time, thou mayest glory in thine own sufficiency, acknowledge no superior, be thine own, and live wholly to thyself: but, certainly, whilst thou owest both the beginning and the progress of thy being unto God, thou owest thyself to him, and art his.

3. God hath another right and title to us, *as he is our governor.*

Now the two chief and comprehensive parts of government, are protection and provision; to defend those, that are under their charge, from harms and injuries: and, to supply them with necessaries.

(1) God doth mightily protect us from those innumerable evils and mischiefs, which would else befall us.

Perils and mishaps are thickly strewed in all our ways; and death and ruin lie everywhere in ambush for us; in our food, our affairs, our recreations, at home and abroad, everywhere, death and danger take their stand and aim at us; dangers, that we could neither foresee, nor prevent, but only the watchful providence of God hath watched over us hitherto. He hath given his angels charge concerning us, to keep us in all our ways. In their hands have they borne us up, so that our feet have not dashed against a stone. Who can particularly recount the infinite number of those private mercies, which we have received? or how often God hath diverted and struck aside many sad casualties, that were just befalling us; and plucked us back, when we were just upon the very edge and brink of destruction? Or, if we consider the boundless wrath and malice of the devil against us, or of wicked men his instruments, have we not great cause thankfully to acknowledge that powerful restraint, which God lays both upon him and them? The devil implacably hates us; and would, every step that we

take, tear our souls from our bodies, and our bodies in pieces, and both from God: wicked men who are inspirited and acted by him, would soon fill the world with the direful effects of their hellish natures; and "by killing, and stealing, and swearing, and lying, and committing adultery, they would break out until blood touched blood:" Hos. iv. 2: but only God holds them both in a strong adamantine chain, so that they cannot come near to hurt us, but by a special permission.

(2) Neither is God only a shield to us, but a sun. "The Lord God is a sun and shield:" Ps. lxxxiv. 11. He not only protects us from dangers, but he likewise cherishes us and provides for us. We live upon his allowance; and are maintained by him, as those, who belong unto his family. All are waiters at his table, and "he giveth them their food in due season:" He crowneth the year with his blessings, and filleth our hearts with food and gladness: he enriches the earth by his blessing, better than a husbandman can by his industry; and makes our sustenance to grow and spring up round about us, allotting unto every one a needful and convenient portion.

If, then, God doth thus protect thee and provide for thee, hath he not a right and title to thee? Is not that life his, which he hath defended from so many deaths; and rescued, when thou hast been surrounded with dangers? If thou wilt not acknowledge thyself his, why dost thou live in his family, eat his bread, and wear his livery, and maintain thyself at his expense? It is but reason and justice, that thou shouldst either refuse his benefits, or not refuse his commands and service.

4. We are God's *by covenant-engagement and solemn promise.*

In our baptism, we were consecrated and devoted to be the Lord's to fight under his banner against all the enemies of his glory and our salvation: therein, we have renounced and abjured the usurpation and tyrannical power, that sin and Satan have exercised over us; and, with the greatest solemnity, have bound ourselves unto the service of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our baptism is a seal: not only on God's part, of the truth and stability of his promises, that we shall obtain remission of our sins and eternal life, upon the performance of the conditions of faith and new obedience; but it is likewise a seal on our part, obliging us to fulfil unto God the promises we have made, of believing in him and obeying him. In this ordinance, you have sealed and delivered yourselves up unto him; for it is the initiating ordinance: it enters you into the Church, registers you among the number of the faithful,

lists you under the spiritual banner: it is, as it were, heaven's press-money, which as soon as you receive, you are enrolled under Jesus Christ, the great captain of your salvation: that sacrament is your military oath, properly so called; and you are bound, by the most serious engagements that can be laid upon a creature, to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant to your lives' end. Now, unless thou thinkest these vows to be written only on the water that sprinkled thee, and wiped away together with that; unless thou accountest thy baptism nothing else but a long-received custom of the place where thou livest, a solemn piece of pageantry, and only a ceremony used on a festival day; thou must needs look upon thyself engaged by the strictest bonds, that truth, religion, vows, and oaths can lay upon thee, to be that God's, unto whom thou didst then professedly give up thyself; and whose badge and cognizance thou then tookest upon thee, that thou mightest be known whose thou art, and to whom thou appertainest.

5. We are God's *by profession, and our own voluntary and free acknowledgment.*

We have taken, and still do own him to be our Lord. And, although, in works, too many deny even "the Lord that bought them;" living in a direct contrariety to their vows, covenants, and engagements: yet, in words and in profession, all acknowledge him to be their Lord and Master. And, though Christ might very justly upbraid too many among us, who are either professors at large or hypocritical dissemblers, as he did the Jews, Luke vi. 46, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" yet this very profession of his name is but the strengthening of his title to us; and all those appellations of our Lord, and our Master, our God, and our Saviour, by which we call him, are but so many acknowledgments of his right unto us. And, if we contradict this profession by an unholy and profane life and conversation, all that we shall get by such fawnings will be, that he, whom we have so often acknowledged for our Lord and Master, may the more justly and the more severely punish us for our disobedience. And consider again, how often hast thou renewed thy baptismal vows! Of how many vows and promises have thy fears, and thy dangers, and thy diseases, and thy convictions, been both the cause and the witnesses? Hast thou not, again and again, given up thyself unto God, and bound thyself by vow never to repeal nor recall it? When death and danger have stared thee in the face, and all other hopes and helps have failed thee, hast thou not promised and sworn, that, if he would save and deliver thee that once, thou wouldst be the

Lord's, and serve and fear him only? God hath heard thy prayers, and accepted thy vows, and rescued thee from thy fears and dangers: and, though he had a sovereign right and title to thee before, upon other accounts; yet, to show how grateful and pleasing the free-will offerings of a devout soul are to him, though we can offer him nothing but what is his own, yet now he especially expects that we should give up ourselves to him by obedience, as we have frequently done by promise, and should at length fulfil what we have so often engaged.

6. Some are God's *in a more especial and peculiar manner.* His chosen and beloved ones; who have, from the heart, given up and devoted themselves to the service of God; and not only bear his mark upon them, in the enjoyment of external privileges and church-ordinances, but bear likewise the stamp of his image upon them in the inward sanctification and renovation of their souls.

These, God "hath set apart for himself:" Ps. iv. 3. They are his "peculiar people:" Titus ii. 14, and 1 Pet. ii. 9, they are called by many special and discriminating titles: "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people:" they are called his portion, and the lot of his inheritance: Deut. xxxii. 9; "The Lord's portion is his people: Jacob is the lot of his inheritance:" they are his jewels: Mal. iii. 17. And, certainly, whatever a man will most earnestly plead his right in, it will be his jewels, his portion, his inheritance, his peculiar treasure; those things, which are of the greatest value and dearest esteem. So God stands much upon his right to his own people and children, whilst all the wicked of the world, although they are his, yet they are in his account vile refuse creatures; more despicable in God's eyes, than true saints are in theirs; the dung and dross, the filth and offscouring of all things. These, indeed, are God's, by the obligation of common nature; but his holy ones are his, by the privileges of special grace. There is a strict and close bond of union between Christ and them: on his part, by his Spirit; on theirs, by their faith. And, being united unto Christ as their head, they are likewise united unto God, as his: for "the head of Christ is God;" 1 Cor. xi. 3.

7. We are God's *by the right of redemption.*

This I have reserved to the last place, because it is the second general part of my text, as being the reason of the proposition. "Ye are not your own," but God's: "for ye are bought with a price."

This, indeed, is a strong title, that God hath to us; a superaddi

tion to the rest. God did, at first, create us in a state of perfect holiness and felicity; but we sold ourselves to Satan, and are become his vassals and bond-slaves. We have thrown God's yoke from off our neck, and his burden from off our shoulders; and have broken his bonds asunder, and cast away his cords from us; and have taken upon us the yoke of the devil, the burden of sin and guilt, a load that would sink us into the very bottom of hell. We stand forfeited to the divine justice; liable to the eternal wrath of the great God; ready to be dragged away every moment unto torments. But, in this our forlorn and desperate condition, that so noble and excellent a piece of the creation might not forever perish, infinite and sovereign mercy interposeth; prepares a ransom for us, which is paid down to the very uttermost farthing of all that the justice of God could demand; and so rescues us from that perdition and misery, into which we had plunged ourselves.

Now the love and mercy of God, in redeeming us, is far more eminent than in creating us. And therefore his right and title to us, upon this account, is far greater, than upon the other. For,

(1) Creation only gives us a being, brings us only out of the dark shade and state of nothing: and, in this our fallen and sinful condition, it only capacitates us for woe and misery. But redemption finds out an expedient, and opens a way for us unto bliss and happiness.

And although, perhaps, metaphysically considered, it is better to be wretched than not to be at all; yet, certainly, in a natural and moral sense, it is not so. For so saith our Saviour: Matt. xxvi. 24. "Woe unto that man, by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man, if he had not been born:" that is, it had been better for him never to have had a being, but to have lain eternally forgotten in the purpose and decree of God, than that he should have a being, an immortal soul bestowed upon him, to be forever most exquisitely tormented for this horrid sin of betraying the life and blood of his Lord and Master. Creation frees us not from so great an evil, neither confers upon us so great and inestimable benefits, as redemption doth. Alas! what torture or vexation is it to mere nothing, that it must eternally remain so? Will not this be the hearty wish and desire of all the damned wretches in hell? Would they not account it a kind of salvation to be annihilated; that their souls and bodies might fall asunder and flit away into nothing, so that they might escape the everlasting residue of their torments? And, if sores and botches, and temporal losses and afflictions, could so far transport even holy

Job, who yet is represented unto us as the mirror of patience, as to cause him to curse the day of his birth, and to wish that he had never seen the light; how much more shall we think will those infernal wretches, on whom God exerciseth the whole skill and power of his wrath, wish that they had been toads or serpents, rather than men! yea, that they had never been at all, but had lain undisturbed in a dark and gloomy nothing; since they shall have more sufferings and anguish to torture them, and no patience, no comfort, no mercy forever to support them! Neither doth creation confer upon them so great and inestimable benefits, as redemption. It is true, we have an excellent being and nature bestowed upon us, as creatures of a higher form than others, the chiefest of all visible and corporeal things: we are endowed with rational and intellectual faculties: and are capable of pleasures, not only such as brute beasts are, but of speculative and mental delights, which are far more noble and more refined. Yet, alas! what are we, but lords perhaps of the world, and all the while slaves to the devil; miserable drudges to our own vile and base lusts, for gratifying of which these excellent natures, which we boast and glory so much of, must forever lie under most inconceivable horror and torments! But redemption brings us into a capacity of far greater happiness, than that, from which we fell: it gives us hopes, that, though we lost paradise, we may gain heaven; yea, and assures us, that we shall certainly do so, if we do not willfully neglect that great salvation, that is purchased for us; and frowardly choose death and our own destruction, before eternal life and joy. So that you see creation is a mercy and blessing to us, chiefly upon the account of redemption; and we are obliged to bless God, that he hath by creation made us subjects capable of that glory and happiness, which he hath prepared for us by redemption.

(2) God's mercy in redeeming us is far more eminent and conspicuous, than in creating us; because it hath been far more expensive to him.

In creation, there needed no more but an almighty fiat: "Let it be: and it was so." Here was nothing of preparation, nor difficulty, nor cost; nor was there any more labor or trouble, than only to will, and speak it. But, in redemption, God must not only act, but suffer; not only speak, but bleed. In creation, there was nothing that might abase or traduce God, nothing but glorious demonstrations of his wisdom and godhead: he humbled not himself, nor descended from his throne, when he formed us; but he

only spake a quickening word, and all creatures presently sprung up, and paid their homage and obeisance to their great Creator. But, in redemption, God himself doth, as it were, lay aside his glory, and humble himself, first to become a creature, and then accursed: he must be wounded, that we might be healed: he must die, that we might live: he must be abased, that we might be exalted. And therefore, certainly, if love and good-will are to be measured, either by the greatness of the benefits conferred upon us, or by the difficulty and damage that accrue to the benefactor, God's mercy in redeeming us, when miserable and lost and undone, is infinitely more considerable, than his mercy in creating us and giving us being. And, yet, if creation alone gives God so great a right to us, that those beings, which we received from him, should therefore be entirely his; shall not redemption make us much more his? Shall we not be his, who hath redeemed us from being wretched and miserable; since we are his who hath given us to be? And, therefore, well might the Apostle argue, "Ye are not your own," but God's: "for ye are bought with a price."

And thus you see how manifold titles God hath to us; as he is our creator, our preserver, our governor, and benefactor; as we are his covenant-servants, united unto him, not only by his benefits, but by his grace; and, lastly, as we are redeemed by him from the service of sin, and the wages due unto it.

But, before I proceed to consider this part of the text as it stands absolutely in itself, give me leave to close up what hath been now spoken concerning God's right unto us, with two or three inferences.

First. See, here, how dear we are unto God, and how highly he esteems us, that he thus strengthens his right to us by so many multiplied titles.

As those, who prize any possession, seek to confirm it to themselves by all the ways that law and equity can find out; and have writings upon writings and evidences upon evidences for it, that their title to it may be unquestionable: thus seems God to deal with us. A single right, for so dear a portion and inheritance, is not enough: and, therefore, though he hath made us, and preserves us, and bountifully supplies us, though we profess ourselves to be his own; yet, to prevent all doubts and suits, he buys us too. He buys what is his own, that it might be more his own: and, because justice and vengeance lay in their claim to us, that the title of his mercy might not be litigious, that there might be nothing in

himself to hinder his quiet enjoyment of us, he pays down a full price to justice, and satisfies all its demands.

Secondly. See how unfaithful we are to him, that we need so many bonds and engagements laid upon us to secure us.

So slippery and deceitful are our hearts, that we are still starting aside from him; and, though we have no right to dispose of ourselves, yet are we still selling or giving away ourselves to every lust and vanity. And, therefore, as we use to deal with those who are of a suspected honesty, lay all the bonds upon them that possibly we can and make them enter into strict and punctual engagements, so doth God with us: he trusts us not upon a single obligation; but makes us enter into bond upon bond: and all scarce sufficient to make such fickle and treacherous creatures stable and faithful to him.

Thirdly. Hence learn, that all impiety and irreligion are the highest wrong and injustice in the world.

"Will a man rob God?" saith the prophet Malachi, ch. iii. 8, intimating, by the very question, that this is such a horrid and heinous sin, as that it is not easy to be supposed any man would be so profligate a wretch as to be guilty of it: and therefore sacrilege, stealing and purloining from God, is justly branded as one of the most foul and odious sins that can be committed. And yet this is a sin more commonly committed, than most men think of. Every wicked man is guilty of sacrilege. He robs God, steals from him, and alienates that which is properly his due. Thou stealest thyself from him, thy heart and thy affections, thy love and thy service: these thou givest to thy lusts, and to the world; and maintainest his sworn enemies upon his right and due. If it be sacrilege, to convert things hallowed and dedicate to profane and common uses, art not thou then a sacrilegious wretch, who stealest away thy soul from God, which is by so many just titles his own: and convertest it not only to common, but filthy and unclean uses? The Apostle tells us, that we are the temple of God: 2 Cor. vi. 16; our hearts are the *sanctum sanctorum*, the "holy of holies," in this temple; and all our faculties are dedicated things, the holy utensils for the worship and service of God. And, what! shall we pollute this temple; set up idols there; and serve our lusts and follies with those very instruments and vessels, which God hath made and prepared for his own service and worship? And, yet, how many such sacrilegious persons are there! The worldling sets up an image of gold in the temple of God: and therefore covetousness is, by the Apostle, called idolatry, Colos. iii. 5: Mammon is his God; and all

the hallowed vessels of the temple, his thoughts, designs, and affections, must all be employed in the service of this idol. The sensual unclean person turns this temple of God into a stew; and, with the heathen, makes his temple the scene of all his impurities. The beastly drunkard makes this temple the place of all his riot and excess; and, with impiety as great as Belshazzar's makes the bowls and vessels of God's sanctuary serve him only to quaff and carouse in. And, indeed, there is no sin whatsoever, but it is complicated with sacrilege. For what is sin, but, as the schools define it, an aversion of the soul from God, and an inordinate conversion of it to the creature? Now to convert that to the creature, which is proper and due to God, is to rob him, to take away what he hath hallowed, to pollute and profane things dedicate, to defile his temple. And, now, to close up this, consider that dreadful threatening of the Apostle, 1 Cor. iii. 17; "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy."

II. The next thing to be considered is the REASON: "For ye are bought with a price."

The force of this reason I have already shown you. I shall now only consider it absolutely, as it is in itself.

In these words is held forth unto us the great mystery of the gospel, our redemption by Jesus Christ. I shall not treat of it in that latitude, that a full and complete handling of this subject would require; but confine myself to speak more briefly only to these few heads.

What this price of our redemption is.

To whom this price was paid, and of whom we were bought.

How the payment of a price can be consistent with the free mercy and grace of God in saving us.

What it is, from which we are by this price redeemed.

i. Let us consider WHAT THIS PRICE IS, WHICH IS PAID DOWN FOR OUR REDEMPTION.

And that is a price infinitely inestimable, consisting in all those dolorous sorrows and sufferings that our Lord Christ underwent in the days of his flesh, when "it pleased the Lord to bruise him." In his nativity and circumcision, was this rich exchequer first opened; which was never afterwards shut, till he paid out to the very last farthing, the very last drop of his most precious blood, as a full and satisfactory price of our redemption. But, though the whole course of his humiliation and abasement was part of this

price which he paid; yet, because the chief and greatest sum of it was told down to God in his death and last passion, and all his other sorrows and sufferings were completed in this, therefore the Scripture doth principally ascribe our redemption to the blood of Christ. So, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19: "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold.....But with the precious blood of Christ." His soul was made "an offering for sin;" Isa. liii. 10. "The blood of Jesus Christ.....cleanseth us from all sin;" 1 John i. 7, and many other places to the same import. Now the blood and death of Christ, and all other parts of his offering, carried in them a sufficient, yea a redundant value, to expiate the sins of the whole world; from the infinite virtue of the hypostatical union of the divine with the human nature, whereby his blood became the blood of God; his sufferings, the abasement and humiliation of God: and this made it a price, not only equivalent unto, but infinitely surpassing and outbidding the purchase, for which it was offered.

ii. Let us consider, TO WHOM THIS PRICE WAS PAID; and that is to our great creditor, God.

The Socinians, on purpose to undermine this fundamental doctrine of Christ's satisfaction, tell us, that, if we are redeemed by a price in this strict and proper sense, that price must then be paid into the hands of Satan, because we are in bondage under him: but this is as weak, as it is impious; for, indeed, Satan is not our creditor; we owe him nothing but hatred and aversion; neither is any man, that is kept in ward for crimes or debts, properly said to be his jailer's prisoner, but the king's or the creditor's; so, though we are naturally in bondage under Satan, yet he is but our jailer: we are not his prisoners; but God's, who is both our sovereign, and our creditor. And therefore the price is not to be paid to him, by whom we are detained: but to him, by whose authority or by whose suit we are detained: and that is, the justice of God: and therefore Christ, by satisfying the justice of God, releaseth us from under the power of Satan. We are under a twofold bondage to the devil: the one moral, by our sins and vices, doing his work and toiling in his drudgery; and thus we are his slaves: the other legal, by the guilt of sin binding us over and making us liable unto his plagues and torments. Christ hath redeemed us from both: improperly, from the former; by the power of his grace breaking asunder our chains and fetters in our conversion, and so setting us free from the service of sin and the devil: most properly, from the

latter; by the infinite virtue of his merits ransoming us from that death, and woe, and wrath, to which we stood exposed, and which else the devil would have inflicted upon us, as being the great minister and executioner of divine vengeance. Now we are not properly redeemed from our moral bondage, our slavery to sin and Satan, but conquered: therefore no price was paid to him, under whose vassalage we were held. But we are properly redeemed from our legal bondage; from our liability to eternal death and sufferings: yet the price ought not to be paid to Satan, but unto God, whose minister and executioner Satan is.

iii. The third general inquiry is, How the payment of a full and satisfactory price can be consistent with the free grace and mercy of God in saving us.

For the Scripture speaks so much of God's mercy and free grace in saving sinners, that some have thought it very difficult to reconcile those expressions with the notion of a price of redemption, properly so called. The chief sense in which grace is said to be free, is, that it gratuitously confers upon us the benefits of our redemption without merit or desert. If then these be merited, if an equal price be paid down for them, what becomes of all those magnificent exaltations of free grace, which the Scripture seems so much to glory in? "I, even I am he, that blotteth out thy transgressions for my name's sake: By grace are ye saved," &c. Certainly, what is so dearly bought and purchased as by the blood of Jesus Christ, cannot be said to be a free and gratuitous gift.

To this I answer, in general, that these things are not at all inconsistent: and, therefore, it ought to be no prejudice to our most high veneration of the infinitely rich and infinitely free grace of God in our redemption, although that redemption be purchased for us, and a price paid down fully answerable to the demands of divine justice.

I shall endeavor to clear up this, in these following particulars.

1. *We are not so freely redeemed, pardoned, and saved, as to exclude all merit and desert on Christ's part.*

This is not necessary to establish free grace, that our Saviour himself should be the object of it. For God transacted with his Son, only upon the terms of strict and impartial justice nor was there ever any one sin, that he was pleased to take upon himself, that was pardoned to him; but a plenary satisfaction was exacted from him, and justice had out its full due in his sufferings. Every sin stood him as dear, as it would have done the sinners

themselves, had God resolved never to have administered mercy and grace unto them: and, therefore, saith the Apostle, Col. i. 14; "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:" and "without shedding of blood there is no remission:" Heb. ix. 22: and, "This is my blood....which is shed....for the remission of sins:" Mat. xxvi. 28. All our sins were laid upon him, and imputed to him; and he underwent and sustained the whole pressure of those punishments, that were due unto them, and is now set down at the right-hand of the Majesty on high, to make intercession for us. So that, though never any who was a sinner, either through the corruption of nature or actual transgression, hath attained to the joy and happiness of heaven, but only through the pardoning grace and mercy of God; yet he, who was the "greatest sinner" (as Luther made bold to call him, and so he was by imputation) is now triumphing in those regions of bliss, crowned with glory, and arrayed with infinite majesty, whose sins yet were never pardoned, nor ever had he the least free grace or mercy shown him; but, whatsoever he hath obtained either for himself or for us, the possession of it for himself and the possibility and assured hopes of it for us, he hath most dearly bought and purchased. Yea, indeed, in respect of this purchase made by Christ, we receive nothing at all of free grace from God; but, whatever we have or expect is paid for to the very utmost of what it is worth: for, as we ourselves are bought with a price, so is every thing we enjoy: even the most common and vulgar blessings, that are promiscuously distributed among the sons of men, all flow to us in a stream of blood.

2. *In respect to ourselves, our redemption, pardon, and salvation, and all the mercies we enjoy, are of mere free grace.*

No merit, no price is required from us: but all is excluded on our part, besides a grateful acknowledgment and an humble expression of our duty, by that rich mercy, which requires these from us; not as the price of our redemption, but only as a testimony of our love and ready obedience. Alas! could we pray, till our knees took root in the earth; could we weep whole rivers, and, after our tears were spent, drop our eyeballs too; could we fast ourselves into ghosts, and sigh away our souls into air; should we give all our goods to the poor, and our bodies to the flames; yet all our prayers, and tears, and fasting and alms, and all the stock of our own righteousness; yea should it be supposed that a tax and subsidy should be levied upon the good works of all mankind and put into one common treasure for the use and benefit of any

one particular soul, yet it would not be found a price rich enough for its redemption, nor at all available to buy off the guilt of the least sin. For, whatsoever is required of us, is but debt and duty; and therefore cannot be meritorious: and, whatsoever is not required of us, is but will-worship and superstitious devotion; and therefore cannot be acceptable. So, then, it is no derogation at all from the free grace of God, that he pardons and saves us upon the intervention of a price: that our pardon is bought, and our inheritance is purchased: for we ourselves have not been at any part of the charge: we have not so much as cast in one mite into this treasury; but all is as freely and gratuitously bestowed upon us, as if it had never been purchased at all.

3. *The relaxing of the rigor of the covenant of works, so far forth as to take off our personal obligation to punishment by the commutation of persons, accepting the substitution of another, of a surety, of a redeemer, is an act of infinite free grace and rich mercy.*

For, by the letter of the law, "do this and live," implying the contrary threatening of death in case of disobedience, every sinner stood bound to suffer the whole curse and penalty in his own person: and God might forever have refused to recede so far from his own right, as to admit of any satisfaction made and tendered by another; but might have seized upon us, who were the transgressors, and bound us over to answer it at the great assize before his dreadful tribunal, and to suffer for it eternal torments in hell. Now, O sinner, though God hath received a price and ransom for thy soul at the hands of another, is this any diminution of the absolute freeness of his grace towards thee? Dost thou envy that he receives satisfaction for thy sins, since he receives it not from thyself? Or, dost thou grudge and repine that he should glorify his justice and severity upon another, since he intends only to glorify his mercy and grace upon thee?

"Yea," you will say, "this indeed is something of mercy and free grace, that God hath stricken my name out of the bond, and put in my surety's, whereas he might justly have exacted the forfeiture from myself: but, had it not been a more glorious demonstration of free grace, absolutely to have forgiven the whole debt, and to have required no payment, no satisfaction at all? We see that, among men, he is accounted most bountiful, that forgives the surety as well as the principal. For, what singular act of mercy is it, to release the debtor, and yet rigorously to prosecute his sponsor and undertaker, from whom he is sure to recover all his right and demands? If God had been pleased thus totally to part

with his right, and neither exact it from us nor our surety, had not this been a far more generous mercy, and a more glorious demonstration of his infinite free grace?"

I answer, No. And therefore assert

4. That *God's free grace is more gloriously demonstrated in the redemption of the world through a price, than it would have been, if he had only freely and arbitrarily remitted to them their offenses and delivered them from eternal death, without requiring any satisfaction.*

And this will appear most clearly, if we consider but these two things.

(1) Who the person is, that is appointed our surety and our ransom.

Is it an angel? truly, if it were, this had been wonderful love, that God should part with so bright and glorious an attendant, send him down to earth, cruciate and torment him for the sins of such vile worms as we are. But, oh astonishment! when, not an angel, but the God of angels; not a servant, but a Son, yea the Son of his eternal love and delights, is, by the Father himself, appointed to such unspeakable miseries and dolors; and thrust under the sword of justice, when it was just falling upon us, only that he might ward off the blow, and save us from a ruin so great and inevitable, though it was to the death and ruin of his only Son! Now judge, yourselves, whether it be not infinitely more expressive of the divine love, to save us by devoting his own Son to be an execration and a sacrifice for us, than if he had only, out of his absolute prerogative, pardoned our sins, and, without more expense or difficulty, received us up into glory. This, indeed, had been grace; but it had been more thrifty and sparing, than that method, which God hath now designed for our salvation, through the blood and sufferings of Jesus Christ. And, therefore, the Scripture every where lays an accent and emphasis upon this: Rom. viii. 32; "He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all:" and, John iii. 16, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son" to save it. God lay under no necessity of saving us at all, and much less lay he under any necessity of saving us in so chargeable a manner as by the death of Christ: but yet "it pleased the Lord to bruise him;" to "make his soul an offering for sin;" and to cause to meet together upon him, all our iniquities and all his plagues and curses. And wherefore was this? Not only that justice might be satisfied, but that mercy might also be satisfied; and free love and grace might be glorified in such a stupendous expression of it. The divine wisdom approves of this way of

redemption, because divine love dictates it to be most advantageous to commend itself unto us: and that ever-adored design of a Mediator took place in God's eternal councils, that it might be a means, as well for the demonstration of mercy, as for the satisfaction of justice.

(2) God himself furnished and enabled our Redeemer to pay down the whole of that price, which he exacted from him.

For the Son of God had not been a sufferer, had he not become the Son of man. He had not been wounded, nor buffeted, nor crucified, nor bled, nor died: he had not had any stock nor treasury of merits to have ransomed us; had he not taken "upon him the form of a servant," had he not appeared "in the likeness of sinful flesh." And, whence had he this, but only from God's providing? Heb. x. 5; "A body hast thou prepared me." Now is it not as much free grace, to furnish our surety with means and abilities to make satisfaction, as to forgive us without requiring any satisfaction at all? Yea, let me add, that free grace is much more glorious, inasmuch as the price with which our Redeemer is furnished, is more than sufficient to pay the debt.

And thus you see, that the intervention of a price is no derogation at all from the freeness of God's grace; yea, rather, this method of redeeming us mightily enhances his mercy, and makes it more rich and glorious. And therefore it is very observable, how the Scripture joins these two together, free grace and the purchased redemption, as if it would on purpose stop the mouths of those, who, by pleading the inconsistency of these, seek to undermine the greatest support of all our faith and hope, and the most dear and precious truth of the Gospel, I mean the satisfaction of Christ for our sins. See Rom. iii. 24; "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:" and Eph. i. 7; "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." What can be more express, to reconcile the grace vouchsafed by God, with the price paid for it by Christ? It is free grace, that justifies us; but yet we are justified through redemption: we are redeemed through his blood; yet this is likewise according to the riches of his grace. And indeed both are easily accommodated: it is of price and purchase, in respect to Christ; but it is of gift and free grace, in respect to us: free, in that God was pleased to accept a surety for us; and much more free, in that this surety was his Son.

iv. The fourth inquiry is, FROM WHAT ARE WE REDEEMED, by that price, which Jesus Christ hath paid down for us.

This I shall briefly show you, in these following particulars.

1. We are redeemed *from the dread wrath and vengeance of God.*

And what an inestimable mercy is this? Vengeance follows a sinner close at the heels, pursues him through all the threatenings of the law, brandishes its flaming sword over his head, and is ready every moment to plunge it into his very heart. The poor guilty sinner trembles, under the direful expectation of that fiery indignation, which will forever consume him: he flies, but knows not whither; is destitute of hope, as he is of help. Now, in this forlorn and desperate condition, for one that might show unto him a city of refuge, and guide his trembling steps, and his amazed soul into it! Now, for a messenger of peace, an interpreter, one of a thousand, that might declare unto man his righteousness! It is done, O soul: Christ Jesus meets the avenger of blood in his pursuit of thee, offers himself to his sword, falls and dies under his hand: whilst thou fliest into thy refuge, and art free both from thy fears and dangers. We find the high-priest, under the law, a notable type of Christ in this particular: for the slayer was to abide in the city of refuge till the death of the high-priest, and then to be set at liberty: Num. xxxv. 28; so, by the death of Jesus Christ our High-priest, we are set at liberty, and may walk in safety, being secured and warranted from the wrath of the avenger. Indeed, the wrath and justice of God is the most dreadful and formidable enemy we can have; but, even this enemy, thy Saviour hath satisfied and reconciled: he hath bought out thy peace for thee; and now thou mayest safely treat with justice itself, as thy friend and patron. The divine wrath is pacified; and God is more contented and recompensed by what thy Redeemer hath suffered for thee, than if he had haled thee forth to suffer in thine own person. God infinitely more acquiesceth in the sufferings of his eternal Son, than he could have done in thine: for thine could have paid his justice but by small parcels at a time, and therefore must have endured eternally; but Christ Jesus paid down the whole sum and debt at once, so that justice could no longer be so if it did not perfectly free us who believe from any farther obligation to wrath and punishment. It is "Jesus," saith the Apostle, who hath "delivered us from the wrath to come:" 1 Thes. i. 10. And therefore, O doubting and trembling Christian, be not so injurious to thy God, as to fear he will revenge those sins upon thee, for which thy Redeemer hath so fully satisfied: thou mayest "go thy way, eat thy

bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for God" hath accepted thee (Ecc. ix. 7): he is at peace with thee, and smiles upon thee. But, if thy conscience still lower, and speak nothing but thunders and threatenings, tell it that thou hast a peacemaker: the blood of Jesus, shed upon the cross, hath pacified God; and his blood, sprinkled upon thy conscience, will likewise atone and pacify it towards thee.

2. We are redeemed *from the slavery and vassalage of the devil.*

He is that mighty tyrant, that hunts after our souls to destroy them; that great dragon, that casts out of his mouth whole floods of persecutions and temptations to overwhelm us. And, if his rage be so inveterate against us here on earth, how implacable, think you, would his malice be towards us in hell! how would he triumph in our eternal perdition, who is now so laborious and solicitous to procure it! But, thanks be unto God, who "hath delivered us from the snare of the fowler;" so that now, through the redemption purchased for us by Christ our Lord, we may safely defy his spite, and contemn all the poor and impotent effects of it.

His power is seen chiefly in three things; in tempting, in accusing, in tormenting. But, by the virtue of the sacrifice of Christ, and the price that he hath paid for our redemption, this threefold power is either wholly taken from him, or else much abated.

(1) His tempting power is restrained and cut short.

He can tempt us no farther, than he hath a permission given him by that God, who hath promised, that we shall not be tempted beyond what we are able to bear, or that he will make a way for us to escape. We see what manacles are upon him, when he must first petition God before he could stretch forth his hand against Job, or touch any thing that he had. And, therefore, O Christian, be confident, that, if he cannot touch thy body or estate, much less shall he touch thy soul and thy conscience by his horrid temptations and injections, without the special leave of God. And, in all his temptations, suppose them never so violent, if thou be but true to thyself, they shall all redound more to his shame and disappointment, than to thine. If thou canst but resist them, and, with a holy scorn and disdain cast back his fiery darts in his face, and keep close to thy duty and allegiance, all his temptations shall but fall upon himself, and be reckoned as his sins, and only thy troubles.

(2) His accusing power is rebuked.

Thus, when Satan comes with a vehement accusation against Joshua, Zech. iii. 2. "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the

Lord, that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee." Our Redeemer will be our advocate; and though, according to the terms of the first covenant of works, which requires perfect and spotless obedience, his accusations will most of them be found true against us; yet, according to the covenant of grace, which requires faith and sincerity, they will be found malicious and impertinent: and our Redeemer will bring us off with the loud applause of saints and angels.

(3) His tormenting power shall be wholly abolished.

The great end and design of the devil is, only that he might train us into that dark region, where himself hath the sole jurisdiction, there to satiate his revenge upon us in our eternal torments. But Christ, our Redeemer, hath destroyed this power of the devil: he hath ransacked this dark shop, and broken in pieces all his horrid racks and instruments of cruelty; so that, unless we ourselves will, not a soul of us shall ever fall into the hands of that merciless executioner.

3. We are redeemed *from the Power of Sin.*

(1) From its reigning power.

It is true, that we cannot, in this life, be freed totally from its molestations. It is like the leprosy, that hath eaten so deep into the walls, that it can never be perfectly cleansed till the house itself be destroyed and abolished. Yet, every true Christian is free from the dominion of it. It may tumultuate and rebel in the best; for we find a law in our members, warring against the law in our minds; many uproars, bandyings, and intestine dissensions: but, yet, it hath lost the sovereignty over them; and is now, not a commander, but a rebel.

(2) We are redeemed, likewise, from the condemning power of sin.

The other freedom from sin is, by the Spirit of Christ, working mightily in us; but this is by the merits of Christ, effectually applied unto us: Rom. viii. 1; "There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." For, certainly, there is not so much malignity in our sins to destroy us, as there is in the blood of Christ to save us. And, he having interposed his infinite merits in our behalf, it would be a great disparagement to his all-sufficiency, if thou, who art but a poor vile creature, couldst have done that, which he, who is an infinite God, could not expiate.

4. We are redeemed *from the curse and malediction of the law.*

All our trials, crosses, and afflictions, that may befal us, are

sanctified to us, and have nothing of the curse in them: for nothing is a curse, but what is inflicted in order to the satisfying of divine justice upon us. But, the justice of God being fully satisfied in the sufferings of our Lord Christ, all our own sufferings, how sharp soever they may be, are only for the exercise of our graces, the trial of our faith and patience, to conform us to the pattern of our Saviour, demonstrations of God's holiness, and means to make us partakers of it. We may rest confidently assured, that, if we believe, there is nothing of the venom and malignity of the curse in them; for "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," saith the Apostle: Gal. iii. 13.

III. We have spoken hitherto of the two former parts of the text; the doctrine, and the reason of it.

The next thing to be considered, is the INFERENCE or COROLLARY, which the Apostle draws from them: "therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit."

Wherein we have two parts:

An exhortation: "glorify God."

A direction how we ought to do it: "in your body, and in your spirit."

It is only upon the former of these, that I intend to insist. Possibly, I may briefly touch and glance upon the other, in my way. And, as a foundation of my following discourse, I shall lay down this plain proposition.

THAT THE INFINITE MERCY OF GOD IN OUR REDEMPTION LAYS AN OBLIGATION UPON US TO GLORIFY HIM IN ALL THAT WE DO, HAVE, AND ARE.

This proposition, I suppose, reacheth the full sense and meaning of the Apostle.

And, in prosecuting it, I shall observe this method:

Show you what it is to glorify God.

How we are to glorify him.

What force and influence the consideration of our redemption hath to oblige us thus to glorify him.

i. WHAT IT IS, TO GLORIFY GOD.

And, here, we may take notice, that there are very many words used in Scripture, equivalent to this phrase of glorifying God. Such are, "do all to the glory of God:" 1 Cor. x. 31. To give glory to God: Ps. xxix. 2. "Give unto the Lord the glory due

unto his name." To honor God: 1 Sam. ii. 30. "Them that honor me, I will honor." To make God's "name, and his praise glorious:" Ps. lxvi. 2; which is indeed the most proper signification of this word "glorify," though other expressions also speak the same sense.

So then, to glorify God, is to make him glorious.

"But, what! is it in the power of any creature to do this? Is not God's glory infinite, eternal, and immutable? And would it not be an attempt, both fond and blasphemous, to go about to crown his Deity with any new rays, which shone not in his essence from all eternity? For, since the divine nature is infinitely simple and uncompounded, whatsoever is in God must be God himself; and, therefore, we may as well create a new godhead, as contribute any new accession of glory to that nature, which is altogether unchangeable. How then can we be said to glorify God, or to make him glorious?"

To this I answer, that glory is twofold: either a real glory, perfecting the subject in which it is; or else a relative glory, which doth not perfect the subject, but only declare those perfections which are already in it. The one we may well call a subjective, the other an objective glory.

1. As to *real and subjective glory*, certain it is, that we cannot so glorify God, but God may and doth thus glorify us.

We cannot thus glorify God; since this would be utterly inconsistent with his eternal unchangeableness, and independence, and self-sufficiency: for, if we could add any real and absolute perfection to his nature, it would necessarily argue a preceding defect, a present change, and a perpetual obligation to his creatures; all which are infinitely incompatible with the divine essence.

But, it is his prerogative so to glorify us; even by endowing our natures with real and absolute perfections.

(1) In our creation:

Bestowing upon us rational and intellectual faculties, a discursive mind, and many other peculiar privileges both of soul and body; and investing us with sovereignty and dominion over inferior creatures. Upon which account, the Psalmist tells us, that God hath crowned man with honor and glory: Ps. viii. 5.

(2) In our restitution from our lapsed estate:

Implanting in us the germs of glory, in our regeneration: for grace is glory in the seed, and glory is but grace in the flower. Thus the Apostle, 2 Cor. iii. 18. We "are changed into the same image from glory to glory:" that is, the image of God is still per-

fecting in us by his Spirit, carrying on his work from one measure and degree of grace unto another. For the whole life of a Christian here on earth, is but as it were one continued sitting under the hand and pencil of the Holy Ghost; till those first lines and obscurer shadows, which were laid in his new birth, receive more life, sweetness, and beauty from his progressive sanctification. And this is a being "changed from glory to glory." And when this is come to that perfection as to need only the last hand, and the completing touch, then,

(3) God glorifies us by the full consummation of our holiness and happiness in heaven.

Thus Christ prays, John xvii. 1: "The hour is come: glorify thy Son;" and so, v. 5: "Glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." And so, when our hour is likewise come, when we have attained to the full measure of our stature in Christ Jesus, God will then glorify us with himself; in that glory, which he hath prepared for us before the world was.

Thus, then, God doth confer real glory upon us; which if we should again think to do towards him, it were no less than an impious and blasphemous arrogance: for it would imply, that he were a defective, mutable, and dependent God. And, therefore, in this sense, Eliphaz speaks excellently, Job xxii. 2, 3: "Can a man be profitable unto God?.....Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? or is it gain to him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?" Certainly, we can neither add any real good to him by our righteousness, nor detract it from him by our wickedness: for he as far above the reach of our good works, to benefit him; as he is above the reach of our sins, to wrong and injure him. Therefore we cannot thus glorify God.

2. There is *a relative glory of God*, which he is then said to have; when his real and absolute perfections are declared, and made manifest and conspicuous to the world.

And this glory perfects not him, to whom it is ascribed; but us, who ascribe it to him. And, thus, God may and ought to be glorified by us. The former may be called his essential glory; this latter, his declarative glory. God's essential glory is nothing else but the infinite perfection of his own nature: it is a constellation and concentration of all his inconceivable attributes of wisdom, power, holiness, justice, mercy, truth, and the rest, into one ever-blessed essence: this glory is capable neither of addition, diminution, nor change. But his declarative glory is nothing else, but

the gloss and shine, the visible splendor and luster, which reflect from his essential glory, upon the notice and admiration of his creatures: and this glory may be both increased and lessened. As to his attributes themselves: so, God is glorious: as to the manifestation of them; so, he is said to be glorified.

(1) God is said to glorify himself.

And that, when he is pleased to dart down a ray, either of his wisdom, or power, or justice, or mercy, or any other of his attributes, so as to make it conspicuous in the administration of affairs here below. And, therefore, we find our blessed Saviour, sadly reflecting upon the sorrows and agonies of his death, at last composeth and resigneth himself with this prayer: "Father, glorify thy name:" and it follows, "Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again;" John xii. 28. Indeed, never was there any thing that God did in the world, that so illustriously conduced to his glory, as the adored design of saving it by his Son: this brought in a large share and revenue of glory to most of his attributes; he had already glorified himself in his wisdom and mercy, by the birth of his Son; and, in his power, by the miracles he wrought; and he would glorify himself again, that is, he would now glorify his dread justice and severity, by the death he was to suffer.

(2) Creatures also may be said to glorify God.

Brute and inanimate creatures do it only passively and objectively; as they exhibit the tracks and imprints of the divine attributes upon them: but rational and intelligent creatures ought to do it actively; by observing and ascribing to him those perfections, which he visibly manifests in the ways of his grace or providence. When they see some eminent effects and footsteps of his wisdom, of his power, of his goodness, or the like, in the management of things here below; and are thereby moved piously and seriously to acknowledge that God is wise, powerful, and gracious, as he expresseth himself to be: this ascribing unto God his attributes from what appears in his actions, is our glorifying of him. And so, on the contrary, when sordid, earthy, and bestial men take no notice of the emanations and beamings-forth of God's attributes, neither so as to have their hearts affected with them nor their lives conformed to them, they are said to dishonor God. Not that any, the most boisterous sinners that are, can invade his essence, or rend away any of his infinite perfections from him: this glory they cannot eclipse, for it shines eternally in the same luster; but they do really eclipse his declarative glory. Which yet is a greater

wrong done to themselves, than to him: for, as the sun is still full of light in itself, when yet we see it under an eclipse by the moon's interposing between us and it, which indeed is not properly so much an eclipse of the sun as of the earth; so the glory of God is obscured and eclipsed by the wickedness of men: not that his essential glory is at all prejudiced, for this retains the same tenor of light and luster forever; but that they observe not, they admire not the bright discoveries of his glorious attributes: and so they dishonor him, not by depriving God of any perfection; but themselves, whose highest perfection and the end of whose being it is, to adore God, and to be made conformable unto him.

And thus you see what it is to glorify God. It is to make him glorious: and that, not by the addition of any new glory to him; but only by declaring that glory, which eternally and unchangeably is in him.

ii. The second thing to be inquired into, is, How we ought to glorify God.

The disquisition of this will both receive light from, and add light unto, what went before.

Now, here, that we may have right and clear apprehensions of a duty, that is so vastly comprehensive, and indeed the whole duty of man, we must remember that all our glorifying of God is only in relation to his essential attributes, which are properly and really his glory.

And, therefore, two things are here to be done.

To show you what these essential attributes are. And,

How they may be glorified by us.

1. The essential attributes of God are many; which, though they differ according to our manner of conception and expression, yet are all really the same nature and essence in God.

I shall mention only those, which are most conspicuous, and which we have most frequent occasion in the course of our lives to glorify. And such are these seven following: Purity and Holiness, Power and Sovereignty, Mercy and Goodness, Equity and Justice, Wisdom and Omniscience, Immensity and Omnipresence, Truth and Veracity. There are, indeed, many more; as Eternity, Unchangeableness, Simplicity, and Oneness, &c.; but of these, because they are not so conversant about human affairs, I shall not now particularly speak.

2. These attributes may be glorified, in general, two ways; either by *adoration*, or else by *declaration*.

(1) We ought to glorify God by a most humble and devout adoration of his infinite attributes and perfections.

Seriously to ponder them in our hearts, to consider their beauty and excellence, to admire those expressions of them which God is pleased to vouchsafe us; and, when we see any notable instance, either of the divine power, or wisdom, or goodness, or justice in the dispensations of his providence, then to prostrate ourselves in the most humble veneration of our souls, and ascribe it unto God, acknowledging that his perfections are gloriously discovered in those effects, and with ravished and inflamed hearts singing unto him the song of Moses and the Lamb, Rev. xv. 3; "Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty: just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy:" this is to glorify God. And, not only thus to observe and to acknowledge the appearance of God's attributes, but to have our affections likewise suited and proportioned to them; as, when God displays his dread justice and severity, either against ourselves or others, then to fear and tremble before him; when he magnifies the riches of his mercy and goodness, to rejoice and praise his holy name; and so, in the like instances, which I intend more particularly to prosecute hereafter: this reverend observing of the manifestations of God's attributes and conforming our affections proportionably unto them, is one chief spiritual method of glorifying God, whereby we do secretly, yet effectually, advance his honor in the inmost retirements and recesses of a devout soul.

(2) There is another way of glorifying God; and that is, by declaration of his infinite perfections.

And this is twofold; either by our words, or by our works.

[1] We ought to glorify God, by declaring his attributes in our words and discourses; setting forth his holiness, wisdom, power, justice, in the most serious and affecting manner that we are able, so as to beget a high and honorable esteem of them in those that hear us.

And, therefore, 1 Pet. iv. 11, the Apostle exhorts us, but especially ministers, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.....that God, in all things, may be glorified." Hence, David often calls his tongue his glory: Ps. lvii. 8; "Awake up, my glory: awake, psaltery and harp:" and, Ps. cviii. 1; "I will sing and give praise, even with my glory." And why is this member

especially called our glory, but because it is the fittest instrument for our glorifying of God? "Therewith bless we God, even the Father," saith the Apostle: James iii. 9.

And this, indeed, is the glory of our glory, and the crown of our excellence, when we employ so noble a part in so noble a work; still to be celebrating his name, and setting forth his praise. And, indeed, what more excellent theme can there be for our discourse, than God? a theme, that will more adorn and beautify our language, than that can adorn and extol him: a theme, that can never be exhausted; but, the more we speak of God, still the more we may, new discoveries still emerging and rising up to our admiring view. And, whilst we affectionately endeavor to exalt the majesty, power, wisdom, and goodness of God in our discourses, if we speak not more elegantly, yet certainly we shall speak more pertinently and to the purpose, than the most florid trifler that abuseth a great deal of wit and rhetoric about toys and nothings. This kind of holy and serious speech will advance us as much above the common rank and pitch of other men, as speech itself doth advance men above the condition of brute beasts.

And yet, alas! how many are there, that turn this their glory into shame; whose tongues are rather sponges to wipe out and deface the glory of God, than pencils to delineate and express it! who scarce ever speak of God, but in an oath; nor make mention of his name, but when they curse and ban by it! Their black mouths are full of the soot of hell, and their tongues set on fire of those infernal flames. They seem to have already learnt the language of hell; and are well fitted, forever to converse with those damned wretches, who have no other use of God, but only to blaspheme and curse him. And, to their own shall they go: and, forever blaspheme, out of the exquisite anguish of their torments; as here they did, out of mere gallantry and humor.

Others, again, though they neither whet nor draw their tongues against God, yet are they very shy of speaking either of him or for him; and would rather make any thing the subject of their discourse, than that God, who hath endowed them with so excellent a faculty. Hence, how much time, how much converse is lost among men; whilst idle tales and raillery, and such like unconcerning vanities, busy their minds and tongues: and no man thinks or speaks of that God, who is intimately present with them, and one of the company! So that we may very justly take up that complaint of the Psalmist, Ps. xii. 2; "They speak vanity, every one with his neighbor."

There is, indeed, a great deal of Christian prudence and discretion requisite in this particular. For, as the amiableness of all duties consists in the right timing and placing of them, so especially of this holy and spiritual discourse. And, therefore, Solomon tells us, Prov. xxv. 11, that "a word, fitly spoken, is like apples of gold in pictures of silver:" and, there is a time when the prudent should keep silence: Amos v. 13. Indeed, the mention of the great God ought not to be trivially made; nor, by an imprudent zeal, importunely and abruptly crowded in, when we may rationally conclude it will be so far from glorifying of God, as only to create a contempt and nauseating in the hearers.

However, a man, that is spiritually skillful in this affair, will watch his opportunities: and, if he hath been exercised in this holy art, it is very seldom, that, in a long converse, he should fail of a fit occasion pertinently to introduce heavenly discourse; and make that which began, perhaps, about poor earthly affairs, yet to end in God, and the contemplations and praises of his eternal attributes: for somewhat of God is considerable in every thing of which we can speak, either his power, or wisdom, or goodness. It should be our care, not to lodge, but only to bait our thoughts and our discourses at creatures, and so quickly pass through them unto God: only let the hints be taken wisely and seasonably. Indeed our discourses should be like Jacob's ladder: though the bottom of them stand upon the earth, yet the top of them should reach into heaven. We find our Saviour very frequent in this practice, still taking occasion from the things of this world to waft over his discourse to things of another world. What a most excellent spiritual discourse doth he draw out of Jacob's well, John iv.! And, now again, by a miracle of his wisdom, as once before by a miracle of his power, he turns water into wine: so, from common and ordinary bread, he takes occasion to set before them, and to break unto them "the bread of life:" John vi. And herein every true Christian should be piously ingenious; to take his advantage from earthly occurrences, to transfer his thoughts and discourse to those attributes of God, which appear most conspicuous and illustrious in them. Thus, if any discourse happen concerning any wonderful revolutions in the affairs of the world, how easy and how natural is it to slide off from this, into the serious consideration of the infinite wisdom and sovereignty of God, in guiding and governing all things here below, according to his eternal and immutable counsels! If it be concerning any remarkable and exemplary plague brought upon a wicked person or

people, doth not this naturally prompt us to speak of the divine justice and the strict severity of God, who will certainly cause men's sins to find them out? If it be of any prosperous success or blessing bestowed upon his church, or any particular person who is a sincere and upright servant of God, doth not this administer to us a fair and pertinent occasion to magnify the infinite mercy of God, who will not suffer virtue and piety to lie always unregarded, but sometimes will as conspicuously own it in this world, as he will gloriously crown it in the world to come? So, I say, there is scarce any thing of which we can discourse, but the divine attributes are so interwoven and appear so plainly in it, that we may thence take very obvious hints to raise our meditations and discourses unto heavenly objects.

That is the first way of glorifying God, by declaring his glory in our words and discourses.

[2] There is another way of glorifying him; and that is, by our works and actions.

And, indeed, this is the chief and principal way of glorifying God: and that, which is the most free from suspicion of guilt and hypocrisy. We may flourish over the attributes of God, with many excellent notions and expressions of them: yet all other expressions may prove deceitful; but those, which are made in men's lives. Hence it is, that our Saviour instructs us in the most effectual course to promote the glory of God: Mat. v. 16; "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven;" and John xv. 8; "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." Many empty, talkative professors there may possibly be, who would fain pass for trees of righteousness and plants of renown; and yet bear nothing but leaves, an external show and a flourishing outside: these they wear for their own ostentation and glory; but are wholly deficient in that, which is most conducive to the glory of God, "the fruits of the Spirit, the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God:" Phil. i. 11.

This, therefore, being the chief way of glorifying God, setting forth and declaring his attributes by our works and actions, I shall the more largely insist on it.

Now there are two ways, in general, to glorify the divine attributes by our actions.

First, by conforming ourselves to the likeness and similitude of them.

And this we ought to do, in respect to the communicable attributes of God's nature: such as his holiness, and mercy, and justice, and wisdom, and truth. These are called communicable attributes, because they may be, in some respect and measure, found also in the creatures. And, to endeavor a resemblance to God in these, is the tendency of grace in us, and the effect of the Spirit of God, making us in this sense partakers of the divine nature. And, the more perfectly we transcribe our original, the more lively these lineaments of God are portrayed upon the soul, the more do we thereby glorify him: for it is his honor to be imitated, in what is inimitable by us. Certainly, it is a sign that we love and esteem whatsoever we strive and endeavor to resemble: and count that excellent and perfect, which we would have found in ourselves: and, therefore, as it is a pleasure to any man, to observe others how they eye and imitate his actions, because it is a testimony of honor and respect which they give him; so is it a delight to God, to observe the endeavors of a holy soul in imitating his perfections, for this is a sign and evidence that they do highly venerate them.

Secondly. We glorify God, by performing those duties unto which his attributes oblige us.

For there are many incommunicable attributes of God, the imitation of which it were impiety or folly for us to attempt. Such are his absolute eternity, both before and after all time: his infinity and immensity, filling all places, yea infinitely exceeding all: the perfect simplicity of his nature, his immutability and unchangeableness, and his independence and self-sufficiency. In none of these, can we be like unto God. Yet these proper and incommunicable attributes enforce and lay upon us many duties, by the conscientious performance of which we ought to glorify God: for we are bound to glorify him, not only in his holiness, and justice, and goodness; but in his eternity, unchangeableness, omnipotence, and omniscience, although indeed in a different manner. The former we ought to glorify, by conforming ourselves to them: the latter we ought to glorify, by performing the duties unto which they oblige us.

Let us therefore consider, in particular, how we ought to glorify God in several of his attributes.

1st. I shall begin with his holiness and purity.

This is an attribute, than which none is more frequently ascribed unto God in Scripture: "the Holy God," and "the Holy One of

Israel." Yea it is spoken of, as if all the rays of God's glory were contracted into this one attribute: "glorious in holiness:" Exod. xv. 11. And, therefore, if God accounts his holiness his most shining and illustrious attribute, it is but reasonable that we should glorify him in that, wherein he esteems himself most glorious: for what is it to glorify God, but to express how glorious he is? And shall we not therefore especially glorify him in that, wherein he is most glorious?

If, then, you would glorify God in his holiness, you must do it by being conformable to it. This is no arrogance, nor proud presumption; but your stated duty: for God hath prefixed his holiness, as the example and motive of yours. So we have it, Lev. xi. 44; "Ye shall be holy, for I am holy:" which is again repeated and pressed upon them, chap. xix. 2, and chap. xx. 7; "Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy:" which the Apostle likewise quotes and transcribes, 1 Pet. i. 15, 16; "As he, which hath called you, is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation: as it is written, be ye holy; for I am holy."

(1st) Now the true notion of holiness, is a separation from all sin and impurity.

This is the holiness of God; in whose most pure essence there is not the least shadow of any thing that is culpable, nor can there be. And this holiness thou oughtest to glorify, by resembling it as perfectly as thy finite human nature can bear so bright an impress.

[1st] Other attributes of God may be glorified, whether thou wilt or no.

He hath glorified his Almighty power, in creating this great world out of nothing. He hath glorified his wisdom, in the beautiful order and harmonious government of the world; conducting all things sweetly and powerfully, by his own counsels, to his own ends. He hath glorified his goodness, by spreading a bountiful table for all living things, and richly providing for all their necessities. These and other of his attributes he hath abundantly glorified: and he might have so done, although mankind had never been created; but the earth had been only filled with brute creatures, and heaven with angels to observe them. But, there is no method to glorify his holiness here below, which he accounts the chiefest part of his glory, and the most precious jewel in his diadem; no method I say to glorify this, but only by our being holy and pure, in conformity to his holiness. And, what! wilt thou suffer God's chief glory to lie obscure and neglected? Shall he be glorified in every

attribute and perfection of his nature, but only that wherein he is most transcendently glorious?

[2dly] Thou ownest and acknowledgest thyself to be God's: at least I am sure thou wouldest willingly be found so at the last and great day.

And, what! dost thou think that God will claim thee to be his, when thou wearest the devil's mark and brand upon thee? Whose image and superscription dost thou bear? God's image, by which he knows his own, is holiness stamped upon them. God doth, as it were, strike a tally, when he sanctifies any soul: he communicates his holiness to it; and, in that, his image and similitude: nor will he own that person, at the last day, who cannot produce this token, this tally, and prove himself to be God's by his conformity unto him. Now, O sinner, thou, that wallowest in the filth of all manner of pollutions, canst thou ever hope to be owned by God, as one of his, when thou retainest all the characters of the devil deeply imprinted on thee? What badge, what cognizance hast thou, to make it known that thou art God's? A human nature, gospel ordinances, and privileges? And so have thousands had, who are now in hell. Wherein is thy likeness and similitude unto God? Possibly, thou resemblest him in thy knowledge and understanding; and hast a great measure of wisdom and prudence bestowed upon thee: possibly, thou resemblest him in power and authority; and he hath stamped that part of his image upon thee, exalting thee in dignity and honor above others: possibly, thou resemblest him likewise in thy beneficence; and art kind and charitable, and helpful to those who stand in need of thee. It is well. But, yet, this is not that image, that God will own thee by. He requires a nearer resemblance of himself, in thy holiness and purity; and, whatsoever else thou mayest think to produce will stand thee in no stead; for, "without holiness, no man shall see the Lord."

(2dly) Now, holiness and purity expresseth itself against sin two ways: in the hatred of, and in the flight from it.

[1st] Therefore glorify God in his holiness, abhorring and hating every sin. Hate it, wheresoever it is found; but, especially, in thyself. Hate it, in others: hate their vices, but yet love their persons; both which thou wilt best perform, if thou laborest by rebukes, exhortations, admonitions, and counsels, to destroy sin in them. But, especially, hate it in thyself: for, certainly, if thou hatest a toad or a serpent wherever it be, thou hast more reason to hate it crawling in thine own bosom.

[2dly] Eschew and avoid all sin for the future; yea, all the appearances, and all the occasions of it. Dread nothing so much as a polluted, defiled conscience.

And, whilst thou thus sincerely endeavorest to keep thy soul pure and spotless, thou mayest, with unspeakable joy, expect that God will glorify his mercy upon thee, who thus glorifiest his holiness in thyself.

2dly. Another attribute of God, which we ought especially to glorify, is his mercy and goodness.

Indeed, these two words, of mercy and goodness, are often promiscuously used, to signify one and the same gracious disposition of God towards his creatures. Yet, if we more accurately consider it, there seems to be this difference between them: that goodness is of a much larger extent and latitude than mercy. For mercy, properly, denotes misery in the object towards which it is expressed: but goodness may be as well expressed towards the happy, as towards the wretched and miserable. It was an effect of God's infinite goodness, to create the world; to continue the glorious angels in that blessed estate, in which they now stand; to preserve the frame of nature in its course, and every creature in its being: but this is not properly called mercy; because it doth not suppose any antecedent misery, from which it frees and rescues them. Briefly, therefore, those free and gratuitous favors, which God bestows upon his creatures, if they were wretched before, are expressions of his mercy; if they were not wretched, are expressions of his goodness: and therefore our creation and preservation are properly effects of the divine goodness, because these benefits do not suppose us lying under any misery, nor do they deliver us out of it; but our redemption and salvation are effects of the divine mercy properly so called, because these are conferred upon us when we were lost, ruined, and undone, with a purpose to deliver us from that abyss of woe and misery into which we had plunged ourselves. But, because the acts, both of God's mercy and goodness, are one and the same, being only modified according to the divers considerations of their objects, therefore we may well treat of them as one and the same attribute in the divine nature.

Now this merciful goodness of God is one of the most radiant and sparkling gems in his crown: and, when God would be seen by us in all his state and splendor, he arrays himself with this attribute. And, therefore, when Moses had attained such holy

freedom with God as to entreat him to show him his glory, Exod. xxxiii. 18, it is remarkable that God condescends to his request, and tells him, v. 19: "I will make all my goodness pass before thee:" he grants his position; but withal informs him, that he could not see his essential glory, for that is too dazzling an object for frail and mortal eyes to bear: "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live:" v. 20. But when God would show himself in the brightest and most illustrious glory that a mortal man can behold, he selects out and puts on this attribute of his goodness: and, accordingly, ch. xxxiv. 6, he passeth by in pomp, and magnificently proclaims his name, "The Lord, the Lord God:" What! the Lord God great and terrible, that formed all things by the word of his mouth, and can destroy all things by the breath of his nostrils? that rides upon the wings of the wind, and makes the clouds the dust of his feet? that rends the mountains in sunder, and makes the hills shrink from his presence? that overturneth kingdoms, and brings decreed destruction upon all the beauty and stability of mundane affairs? No: though God be very glorious in these expressions of his power and majesty; yet this is not that name, which he chiefly delights to honor: but, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; Keeping mercy for thousands; forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin."

Thus you see God owns his mercy and goodness, as his dearest attribute and his peculiar glory: he seems, as it were, to esteem and value himself upon it: and therefore, certainly, we ought to glorify him in that, wherein he accounts himself so glorious.

But how may we glorify God in his mercy and goodness?

I answer, these four ways.

(1st) By endeavoring to assimilate ourselves unto it; laboring after an universal goodness, in all our converse and demeanor.

Then is God's goodness glorified, when we endeavor to transcribe and copy it forth in ourselves. Every true Christian ought to be so deeply tinctured with the serious consideration of the mercy and goodness of God, till he is transformed into the very image and likeness of it. This will render it visible and conspicuous unto men. How should we know that the sun is so bright and glorious a creature, if the air were not all strewed and powdered with its light? Our eyes discern the light of the sun, by the light of the air through which it diffuses and scatters its rays, and turns all that vast body into light and splendor.

And so, truly, when thou thyself art turned into mercy and

goodness, others will behold the mercy and goodness of God shining forth in thee, and be induced to give God the glory. And that, upon a double account:

First. Whilst thou art beneficent and good to others, they cannot but gratefully acknowledge the mercy of God, in so sweetly disposing and inclining thy heart to those actions of love and kindness towards them.

And, indeed, this thou oughtest to propound to thyself as thy utmost end, in all the offices of charity and humanity that thou dost unto others, that God may have the praise and glory of all. And, therefore, if thou relievest the poor, or rescuest the oppressed, or remittest thy due to those whom a rigorous exacting of it would ruin, and dost it with an intent that thou thyself mayest be praised and extolled for it, and not God; this is so far from being charity, that it is sacrilege: for all mercy and compassion in us, is but the mercy of God communicating itself to others through us; as all light in the air, is but the light of the sun shining through it. And, therefore all the good thou dost or canst do, thou dost it upon God's stock; and, certainly, if thou employest his stock, it is but reason that he should have the interest; which if thou withholdest from him, and assumest to thyself, thou robbest God of his right; and, whilst thou art bountiful in communicating his goodness unto others, thou art likewise unjust in taking his praise and glory to thyself. It is a most commendable piety in those, who, when they have given alms to relieve the bodily necessities of the poor, have likewise given a better alms to their souls, in exhorting them not so much to thank them but God, who hath both enabled and inclined them to do it. And, indeed, though we are bound to acknowledge and respect those, who have been kind and munificent to us; yet we ought especially to bless and praise God, who hath inspired and moved them to those actions, and derived his universal and extended goodness through them unto us: this is the way to make their goodness glorify God's goodness, when we take notice how the mercy of God appears in their mercy to us: and therefore it is remarkable, when Jacob addresseth himself unto Esau, and had found favor in his sight, he tells him, Gen. xxxiii. 10; "I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me:" that is, in the courteous and reconciled countenance of his brother, he discerned the favor and gracious dealing of God with him. So should we say, when we partake of any benefit or goodness from men: "In such a one's goodness, I have seen the goodness of God: in his bounty, I have

seen the bounty of God." And thus, by assimilating ourselves unto God in this attribute, we shall give occasion to grateful and considerate persons frequently to make such reflections, which will highly conduce to his praise and glory.

Secondly. Showing mercy and doing good unto others will glorify God, as it may cause them to reflect, that, if there be so much goodness in a creature, how infinitely more is there then in the Creator.

This is a rational and easy inference, which those, who are any way ingenuous, cannot fail to make when they behold that benevolence, and bounty, and readiness to help and assist others, which appears in you. And, therefore, saith our Saviour, Mat. v. 16: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." We shall thus glorify him, by giving others a happy occasion to conclude, that, if there be so much mercy and goodness in the creature, then certainly there is infinitely more in God himself: if a river pours forth such abundance of waters to refresh the dry and parched earth, how boundless must the treasury of the great deep be, from whence, as Solomon tells us, they are all supplied! Now think with thyself, O Christian! what a vast sum and revenue of glory will come in to God, when, by thy beneficence and liberality, thou shalt give a worthy occasion of extolling his; and, though thou canst resemble it but in part, according to the stinted measures of thy finite nature and ability, yet shalt glorify it entirely, by causing others to adore the infinite riches of it in the divine nature.

Now that our mercy and goodness may be like unto God's, it must have in it these four qualifications.

[1st] It must be a general goodness, universally respecting all.

For God's is so. Ps. cxlv. 16; "Thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing." He spreadeth his cherishing wings over all the creation; and, with his rich bounty, rejoiceth all the works of his hands. And, if thou wilt glorify him, thou must act proportionably within thy sphere; and do good unto all, according to the opportunities and abilities that God hath bestowed upon thee: thy mercy is not like God's if thou sufferest any, who make their applications to thee, and whom thou canst relieve, to go away with the pressure of their wants and necessities upon them. And, as though this field were not large enough for the exercise of our mercy, and mankind were too few for us to do good unto, God hath required that we should show mercy and goodness to the very beasts; Prov. xii. 10: "A righteous man

regardeth the life of his beast." And, so far doth he esteem this sweet and compassionate temper in us, that he chooseth rather to dispense with his own immediate service and worship, than to hinder us from any opportunities of doing good to any creature: still preferring mercy before sacrifice; and accounting the life of one beast saved, a more acceptable service, than the death of many beasts sacrificed.

[2dly] It must be a free, undeserved goodness, to be like unto God's.

For his is so. Yea, so undeserved, that he lays it forth upon those, who have deserved his wrath and vengeance: "He maketh his sun to shine on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust:" Mat. v. 45. And, if we would glorify God by our likeness to him in this attribute, our goodness must proceed by the same measures. Possibly, some have abused and affronted us; and now it is in our power to revenge ourselves upon them: but know, that the Divine providence hath given thee an opportunity for revenge; yet the Divine mercy requires that thou shouldst not only forgive the injury, but requite it with courtesies and kind offices: thou oughtest not to diminish the least part of that good, which thou canst do them; upon consideration of wrongs and contumelies, which thou hast received from them. This, indeed, is a high and transcendent pitch of goodness; yet this is but that, which our Saviour very instantly presseth upon his disciples, as the very mark and badge by which they may be known to be the children of God. See Mat. v. 44—48, and Luke vi. 27—37.

[3dly] Our goodness, that it may be like unto God's, must be wholly disinterested.

We must not carry on any selfish designs by it; nor seem to do others good, but really intend only our own advantage: this is but to make a benefit a bait, which whilst others take, they are themselves taken. God's goodness is more generous; expecting no recompense to be made: for how can we be profitable to him? Or what can we return him, that is not his own? And, although his favors towards us be many and great, yet he is pleased to reckon that we acquit ourselves of our obligations, if we return him but acknowledgment and praise. And, if we would glorify God, such must our goodness be. Our Saviour hath taught us to scorn that sordid way of laying snares for other men's courtesies, by ours to them: Luke xiv. 12, 13; "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not.....thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again, and so a recompense be made thee." And, whosoever he be, that is good

and bountiful to others upon such a mean design, he doth but barter and truck benefits, not bestow them.

[4thly] Our goodness must be discreet, likewise: and though it ought to be universal, it must be discriminating too: for even God's is so.

He doth good unto all; yet not equally. Some there are, who pass only under the general influences of his common bounty; and, though he give a liberal allowance to these, yet he bestows the treasures of his grace and mercy and the inheritance of his glory on those, who are the excellent ones, and whom he hath made worthy; hence God is said to be "the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe:" 1 Tim. iv. 10. And, if we would glorify God, we must imitate him in this particular also. Though our goodness ought to be general; and, so far as we are able, we should tread where God hath passed on before us: yet we ought, likewise, to put a difference, as he hath done; and to make a deeper impression of our charity and goodness upon some, than upon others. Hence the Apostle exhorts us, Gal. vi. 10; "As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." All, that are in want, challenge relief from thee, according to thine ability: but, seest thou any, that are poor in outward respects, but yet rich in faith? Thou art obliged, under a double bond, to supply and provide for them; both as they are partakers of the same common human nature, and much more as they are partakers of the divine and heavenly nature. And fear not, lest such an enlarged bounty and goodness, as I have described to you, should inevitably ruin and beggar you; for Christian prudence must here dictate to you the measures unto which your ability can extend: the only danger is, lest you should take them too short. Nor is it to imitate God, if, by some few profuse acts of charity (for there may be lavishness even in this), I say, it is not to imitate God, if, by some few acts of charity, you render yourselves incapable of doing more: for God is good unto us; yet so, as he still keeps the stock in his own hands, and doth not exhaust himself to replenish us: but sit down, and impartially consider what is necessary for thyself and thine, in the rank and station in which the providence of God hath set thee; and whatsoever abounds, thou oughtest not to look upon as thine, but as God's and the poor's: thou art only a trustee for their use; and, if thou withholdest it from them, thou art no better than a thief and a robber, and stealest even that which the law of man calls thine. Indeed, it were very strange, if the most of us could not cut off

some superfluous and unnecessary expenses, and lay them up into a treasury for good works: we see how sparing and thrifty some men's covetousness is; who will pare away the very edges of decency and fitness, only that they may amass their sordid sums together, when all the use they can make of their wealth is but to look upon it: and why should not piety and charity teach us as much thrift, as vice and covetousness? But only that men are grossly foolish in this particular; looking upon whatsoever is laid out this way, as lost, and no longer theirs; whereas, indeed, had they but faith, and half that religion which they may pretend unto, they would know, that, that only is lost which is unduly kept, and that safest laid up which is well laid out. And, if thou canst but purchase the glory of God, though by the greatest expense, either by relieving or encouraging his servants, know it is the most gainful bargain that ever thou madest: and faith will tell thee, that thou hast but remitted thy wealth to heaven, where it shall be punctually paid thee with abundant interest; and, in the meanwhile, God hath given as many bonds, as he hath made promises, to secure thee.

This, therefore, is the first way of glorifying God's mercy and goodness, by our resemblance to it; cherishing in ourselves a generous, free, disinterested, and discreet goodness towards others.

I have the longer insisted upon this, because I see it wofully neglected amongst Christians; who fall so infinitely short of imitating God in the mercifulness and goodness of his nature, that they look upon it as a piece of religion to be sour, morose, and supercilious, and too frequently proud despisers of others. Some are unjust in their dealings, and take all advantages to defraud and circumvent their brethren; and are so far from doing what love and charity require, that they answer not the rules of law and equity. Some, if they seek not the ruin of others, yet are ready to rejoice at it; and, with a devilish kind of delight, please themselves, either with the miscarriages or mishaps of their brethren. Others, again, love to sow discords, and to stir up strife between brethren; that, when they are all in a flame and combustion, they may sit by and warm themselves. What shall I say concerning these? Is this to imitate God? Is this to copy forth his universal goodness? Or, do they not rather give a sad occasion to others, to open their black mouths, and to blaspheme God; imputing all their cruelty, injustice, and unmercifulness, to their profession, and to their religion; than which there is no one thing that doth more contradict it? If, therefore, you have any respect, any tenderness for the glory of God, I beseech and charge you, O Christians, by

your beneficence, charity, and ready goodness, to redeem the honor of God, which hath deeply suffered through your defaults; and to stop the mouths of those, to whom religion is odious enough by nature, but rendered despicable, as well as odious; and to whom the name of a saint and a professor is made a by-word, only to denote a covetous, niggardly, cruel, and oppressive person, by the lives of too many who walk quite contrary to their rule and to their great exemplar. For, in this, God hath set you no lower a pattern than himself; Luke vi. 36: "Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful."

(2dly) We ought to glorify the mercy of God, by endeavoring to render ourselves fit objects for his mercy to be laid out upon.

Certainly, he little honors the mercy of a prince, who will not render himself capable of it. And, let me tell you, it is the greatest scorn and contempt you can cast upon the rich and free mercy of God, that, when he hath so gloriously proclaimed it, and told you upon what terms you may be made partakers of it, you should refuse to come up to those terms, as if it were not so much worth, as the price at which God offers it. What is it, that God expects from you? It is only repentance, and reformation of life; a sincere and universal obedience to his laws: upon the performance of this, his mercy, his Christ, himself, his heaven, his all, are yours; Prov. xxviii. 13: "Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins, shall have mercy." And, what! wilt thou stick at this? If God had required some great thing of you, the utter ruin and impoverishing of your estates, the macerating and torturing of your bodies, the plucking out of your right eyes and cutting off your right hands, even in a literal sense, would you not have done it, that you might obtain mercy and salvation at the last? See what terms those, who were convinced of their misery, and of their absolute need of mercy to save them, do of themselves voluntarily offer unto God; far more grievous and extreme than any which he hath required; Micah vi. 6, 7: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the High God?.....Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" Certainly, these seem to value mercy, when they bid so high for it, though they were ignorant of the right way of obtaining it. And now, when God shall inform us, that all he requires of us is but "to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with him," it is a most heinous affront and disparagement to his mercy, if we will not come up to these terms

which are so easy and equitable; yea, and have enough in themselves to recommend them to us, although there were no farther benefit to be expected by the performance of them. Be persuaded, therefore, O Christians, to glorify the mercy of God by repentance, obedience, and a holy life. Declare to all the world, that you have a high valuation and esteem of the infinite mercy of God; by being willing to perform that for obtaining it, which others detract and refuse. They must needs have very slight and undervaluing thoughts of mercy, who will not be prevailed upon to mortify one sin, to deny themselves, in any of their secular advantages and concerns, to suffer a scoff or a jeer for that holiness and piety which alone can bring them within the reach and under the influences of mercy: but he, that can with a bold and generous resolution break through all these little difficulties, that can suffer whatsoever God lays upon him, and do whatsoever God requires from him, he it is, that glorifies mercy; because by this he demonstrates that he thinks it worth having, at what price and rate soever it be set. Clemens Alexandrinus hath an excellent passage in his Protreptic: "The Lord," saith he, "shows us mercy and saves us, as though he could make no other use nor advantage of us, than as he doth save us." Now thou, who wilt not glorify the mercy of God, endeavoring by a holy and obedient life to promote thine own salvation, what dost thou but frustrate the great end for which he hath made thee, which is the glory of his mercy; and therefore dost, in a high measure, affront and dishonor him?

(3dly) When thou art thus fitted and prepared for mercy, then glorify it by a confident and firm reliance upon it.

To venture upon the mercy of God, whilst thou yet continuest impenitent in thy sins, is a most bold and desperate presumption: but, to venture thy soul and thy eternal salvation upon his mere goodness and mercy, whilst thou art careful to lead a holy, pious, and obedient life, is so far from being presumption, that it is the best and most effectual way to glorify it. And therefore thou, O Soul, who fearest the Lord and desirest to approve thyself unto him in uprightness and sincerity, why walkest thou with such a drooping and dejected countenance? Why sufferest thou thy conscience to be clouded with fears and racked with horrors? Is it not an infinite disparagement to the rich mercy of God, to fear that he will damn thee, whilst thou fearest to provoke him? Who would think that thou servest a merciful and gracious God, when they see thee solicitous to perform thy duty to him; and yet anxious and distrustful concerning the acceptance of it? These thy perplexities

and despondencies do highly dishonor God, fright men from his service, and do little less than brand him with the black and odious note of cruelty and tyranny. Is this the way to allure men to the profession and practice of holiness, when they see that verified in thee, the suspicion of which hath so often scared them from it, viz., that they must forever quit all their pleasant days, and be eaten up with dismal discontents and the rust of melancholy? Let those thus slavishly fear God and despair of his mercy, whose sins, and impenitence in them, fit them for nothing but wrath and destruction: but, for a holy, pious Christian, the desires of whose soul are towards God, and his endeavors correspondent to his desires, for such an one to despond of mercy, is the greatest disgrace and dishonor that he can cast upon God: for, if there be any such attribute belonging unto his nature as mercy, it is certainly thine; and, if there be not, think then what a God dost thou serve! Clear up, therefore, O Christian: scatter all thy dark and gloomy thoughts: smooth out thy wrinkled conscience: and, whilst thou perseverest in a careful and sincere obedience unto his commands, cast thyself boldly upon his mercy; and, believe it, it will never sink under thee, nor suffer thee to sink into that hell which thou now fearest. Doubt nothing: thou canst not perish, so long as the mercy of God endureth. And, whilst thou thus, with an humble confidence, layest the whole weight and stress of thy soul upon it, thou dost more glorify God, than those doubting and perplexed souls, who always serve him suspiciously, and dare scarce approach near him lest he should devour them: certainly, this is so contrary to the nature of God, who is love and goodness itself to those that serve him, that he cannot but take it ill, when they seem to account of him no otherwise than an ireful and ravenous deity. Fear not: this is no presumption, but a holy faith, a filial freedom of spirit, which is most acceptable unto God. He delights in the services of those, who address themselves unto him with an open heart and a cheerful soul: Ps. cxlvii. 11; "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy."

(4thly) Another way by which we ought to glorify the mercy and goodness of God, is, by praising him for all the effects and expressions of it.

Ps. l. 23; "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me." Praise is God's tribute; the only impost, that he lays upon all his benefits: it is all the return, that he expects from us. Certainly, they are guilty of foul and black ingratitude, who would defraud God even of this small acknowledgment. Our whole lives are thick set with mercies:

wheresoever we turn, we find ourselves encompassed and surrounded with blessings. Now what canst thou do less than lift up thy heart and thy voice to God, and give him thanks? This God is pleased to account a glorifying of him, because it owneth his free goodness to be the original of all: and, therefore, when the ten lepers were cleansed, and only one of them returned to return thanks for his cure, our Saviour, Luke xvii. 18, saith, "There are not found, that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger." Reflect now upon the sum and stock of thy mercies. Hast thou riches, or health, or repute, or friends, or all of these? Ascribe them to the mercy of God, which hath so plentifully furnished thee with all these mercies: say, "Lord, I have received them all from thy bounty, and I desire to return the thankful acknowledgment of all to thy glory. Accept of that share, which alone is worthy of thee; even my humble thanks and praise for them." Whilst thou thus praisest God for his goodness, thou payest him his tribute: all the rest is thine; which thou mayest enjoy and use with comfort.

And thus I have, at large, shown you how you ought to glorify God in his mercy and goodness: viz., by your conformity unto it; preparing yourselves to be fit vessels of it; trusting and relying upon it; and blessing and praising him for it.

3dly. Another attribute, which we are to glorify, is the divine immensity and omnipresence.

That this is an essential attribute and property of the divine nature, both Scripture and reason do abundantly testify. He pervades all beings, is excluded out of none, neither included in any: 1 Kings viii. 27: "Behold, the heaven, and heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee;" and, certainly, if God cannot be contained in them, but his essence dilates and expands itself infinitely beyond and above them, into that endless and boundless space in which never any thing was created nor doth exist but God only, much less then can he be contained within the compass of any other finite and created being.

Now we ought to glorify this attribute of God's omnipresence,

(1st) By our reliance and dependence upon him, in all our fears and dangers.

Art thou surrounded with dangers on every side, and in the very jaws of death and destruction? Yet consider, that thy God, who is everywhere present, is likewise present with thee there; and there is no danger so great nor imminent, that can fright him

from thee: he, who hath been a sun to thee in thy prosperity, will now be a shield to thee in thine adversity. Indeed, we ought not rashly to run headlong upon dangers, when we have no call to expose ourselves to them: this is not to trust God, but to tempt him: and therefore our Saviour well answered the devil, when he impudently bid him cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, because God would give his angels charge to bear him up in their hands that he should not dash his foot against a stone, "It is written, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God;" for it is tempting God, when we rely upon his presence and protection to preserve us from those dangers, into which, upon that presumption, we voluntarily and needlessly precipitate ourselves. But if, either in the way of thy ordinary employment or else in some special and extraordinary cases, thou art called to do that, which perhaps may be attended with danger and hazard, refuse it not; but glorify the omnipresence of God and his power, by depending upon him, who will always be nearer unto thee than dangers can be. We show ourselves to be very irrational and childish, in being secure and confident in some places and at some times, but timorous and fearful at others: as if to be alone or in the dark were more justly dreadful, than to be in the company of our friends at noon-day. Is not God everywhere present, at all times? God beholds us clearly in the most gloomy night: "Darkness and light are both alike to him:" neither can any evil have power over us, one time more than another, without his permission; and why then should our fears? Isa. xli. 10: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God.....yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness:" and, again, v. 14: "Fear not, thou worm Jacob.....I will help thee, saith the Lord," and no foot of violence shall crush thee: so, again, Isa. xliii. 2: "When thou passest.....through the fire.....and through the waters, I will be with thee." And, in the confidence of this omnipresence of God, the Psalmist resolves not to be terrified with the most dreadful shapes and apparitions of danger: Ps. xxiii. 4: "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death," though death and danger should meet me full in their most dismal shapes, yet "I will fear no evil: for thou art with me." A great reason why we are so frequently overtaken with these low and unbecoming fears, is, because we do not sufficiently steep our thoughts in the consideration of this attribute of God's omnipresence: and so we skulk, and tremble, and betray a great deal of base and degenerate fear: as though we lived without a God in

the world, and there were no supreme mind present with us to help and relieve us; but we were left wholly to shift for ourselves. It is the observation of a heathen philosopher, (and I think it is Plutarch,) "that if brute beasts be animated and encouraged by the presence of a man, because he is of a superior nature to them; how much more should man himself be encouraged by the presence of the great God with him!" Glorify him, therefore, by a bold and courageous encountering of all dangers, to which his providence or his law shall call thee: and let it appear, that thou canst despise all those bugbears and hideous specters of dangers, which affright others; because God is present with thee, and he is able to deliver thee.

(2dly) We ought to glorify this attribute of God's omnipresence, by our constantly maintaining communion and fellowship with him.

Thou canst not say, "Alas! God is in heaven above, and I am here upon the earth; and what converse or intercourse can I maintain with his Divine Majesty?" No: believe it, God is present with thee wheresoever thou art, and as much within thee as thy soul is in thy body. He is not a God afar off: but he is near unto thee, even in thy heart, and in the very center of thy being: and therefore thou mayest converse with him, by the silent whispers of thy thoughts. When the heart doth but breathe and pant towards God, when it conceives thoughts too big and quick to be uttered, thoughts which dart themselves like lightning out of our bosom into his; even this is, in the account of God, as truly solid and substantial communion with him, as the performance of the more solemn and conspicuous duties of religion. This is converse with God; a converse, which no place, no employment, no condition of life can possibly hinder. Be your affairs never so weighty and urgent, it is impossible that they should crowd so close together, as to leave no room for heavenly thoughts to come in between them. Be you in what company you will, if you cannot turn the discourse heavenward, yet you may well turn your thoughts thither. For ejaculations are winged messengers: or, if they were not, yet God is always present with us, and lays his ear to our very hearts; and hears the voice of our thoughts more distinctly, than we can hear the voice of one another's words.

(3dly) Glorify God's omnipresence, by continually demeaning yourselves with an humble and reverential fear before him.

Wheresoever you are, imprint this consideration chiefly upon your hearts: "Now I am with God: he is present with me, in the

city, in the field, in the room, in the congregation, in my closet, in all my ways and converse in the world. And, what! can I be vain, and frothy, and light, when I am before a Majesty so great and glorious! If the presence of some earthly prince strike an awe and reverence into us when we come before him, how much more should the consideration of God's presence awe us, in comparison with whom all the glory of the greatest monarchs upon earth is but a silly piece of pageantry!" Now those, who would express honor towards another, will not willingly do any thing that is distasteful to him, or unworthy of his presence. And let me tell you, that there is only one thing unworthy of the presence of God; and that is, sin: though thou art poor, or diseased, and the most despicable creature among the sons of men, so that they account it a kind of disparagement to them to be present with thee; yet God is present with thee, and thinks it no dishonor, for there is nothing in this unworthy of his glory: but, if thou art a sinful, lewd, debauched, and vicious wretch, thereby indeed thou dishonorest the presence of God, and dost that which is unworthy for him to behold; for God is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity," as the prophet speaks, Hab. i. 13. If, therefore, you would glorify this attribute of God, let your conversation be always as in his sight and under his eye, with all gravity and seriousness, with all reverence and submission, with all purity and holiness. And those, who so honor his common presence with them here on earth, he will honor with his glorious presence in heaven.

4thly. Another attribute, that we are to glorify, is the wisdom and omniscience of God.

Indeed, his wisdom and omniscience do somewhat differ. For omniscience respects only the bare act of God's intention, whereby he knows and sees all things: but wisdom is a practical knowledge; and denotes counsel, in the government and guidance of all things to his own prefixed and foreordained ends. Yet, because they are so near alike, I shall speak of them together.

Now God's wisdom and knowledge may be glorified by us, many ways.

(1st) By our endeavors to increase in wisdom and knowledge.

All wisdom is a bright ray of the deity darted down into the soul: it is the light of a rational creature, and doth mightily assimilate us unto God, for "God is light;" and the more light we have beaming into our understandings, the more expressly do we bear

the resemblance and image of God. Certainly, a dark and ignorant soul can never glorify God: for, as light is necessarily required to all reflections; so, there can be no representation of the glory of God made in that soul, that is clouded over and smutted with ignorance and error. Yea, indeed, knowledge is necessary, not only to our glorifying God in this attribute, but in all the rest: for, as an ignorant man cannot extol the wisdom of God, because he is not capable of perceiving the glorious discoveries thereof, either in the methods of his grace or providence (and, therefore, when the Psalmist had spoken with admiration of the works and counsels of God, he tells us, Ps. xcii. 6; "A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this;") so neither can he adore the goodness, power, or mercy of God, because he observes not those effects of them in which they are to be venerated and adored. A blind man may as aptly commend the brightness of the sun, the beauty and variety of colors, the orderly and regular motion of the stars and planets as an ignorant man declare the glory of God's attributes which he could never observe; for what blindness is to the eye, the same is ignorance to the soul.

(2dly) We ought to glorify the wisdom of God, by relying upon it when we are in straits and difficulties, and can find no way to extricate ourselves.

When our affairs are so entangled, that we can get no end by which to unravel them, then especially we should commit ourselves to that sovereign wisdom before which all difficulties shall vanish, and whatsoever seemed most intricate and perplexed shall become most plain and open. And, therefore, when affairs seem to run quite contrary both to our hopes and to all probability of success, let us then glorify the wisdom of God, by intrusting him with the conduct of all, and quietly and contentedly waiting the issue. There are some links in the chain of providence, that seem not well to hang together; and yet even these are so ordered by the great Artificer, that they most forcibly draw in one the other. And, as we see the wheels of a clock or watch move all with contrary motions to each other, and yet by these contrary motions they make it go right: so, likewise, all the contrary motions and revolutions, that we see in these inferior engines, are so wisely contrived by the first cause and mover of them all, that, however odd and perplexed they may appear, yet they are all subservient to each other and to the regular proceeding of God's design: the great machine of the world would not go right, if they should move any otherwise. What could seem more directly to thwart

Joseph's advancement, and the fulfilling of those prophetic dreams which presaged him so much honor, than to be sold for a slave, and imprisoned for a malefactor? But, upon these strange occurrences was built the whole fabric of his advancement. Certainly, Providence hath secret methods of its own, which we cannot trace. And therefore let us glorify God, by relying on his wisdom in the worst of events, when our own cannot direct us; because we know not but that these things may tend to our good and advantage. And, when our hopes and designs seem dead, withered, and dried, past all semblance and human probability of reviving; yet if then our faith should be questioned, as the Prophet was, (Ezek. xxxvii. 3,) "Son of man, can these bones live?" we ought to return the same answer that he doth, "O Lord God, thou knowest."

(3dly) We ought to glorify the omniscience of God, by the sincerity of all our ends and actions.

God inspects our very hearts, and distinctly sees the first fluttering and hovering of our thoughts and desires: if there be but the thinnest film or shadow of an imagination flitting there, his all-seeing eye seizeth on it: the divine knowledge pierceth into the darkest corners and most secret recesses of the soul; and looks through that obscure vault, where all our unfledged thoughts lie confusedly tumbling one upon another: he sees our thoughts, that lie sleeping in the abyss and center of the soul, long before they begin to heave and emerge to the top and surface of it: "Thou understandest my thought," saith the Psalmist, "afar off." Ps. cxxxix. 2. Now if we would glorify this searching and comprehensive omniscience, let us be careful to approve all our thoughts, and desires, and designs, in uprightness and integrity unto God: then is it a sign that we believe him to be an all-knowing God, when we dare not to dally with lascivious fancy, nor suffer any impure, covetous, malicious thoughts and affections so much as once to breathe upon the soul; when we dare not commit any sin in secret, although the thickest curtains of night and darkness be drawn about us; when we dare not perform holy duties in a cold and heartless manner, and, with bended knees and elevated hands and all seemingly devout postures, solemnly mock the great God, whilst the mind all the while wanders after vanity, and nothing is less heeded by us in our duties than that God to whom we would be thought to perform them. In these three things, doth the sincerity of a true Christian most of all appear: viz., in not daring to allow himself in sinful thoughts; in not daring to allow himself in secret sins; in not daring to perform holy duties

slightly and superficially. Now what other reason can there be, why he should so carefully abstain from these sins, which if he did indulge he might yet carry a fair show and be well reputed of by men, but only that he knows God seeth not as men see? They can but look upon the outward features of religion, and, if they be comely and well complexioned, ought in charity to judge the best: but God looks into the very vitals of the soul; and discovers hypocritical professors to be like hectical persons, rotten and unsound within, when outwardly they appear healthy and well colored. Indeed, every hypocrite doth most heinously disparage this attribute: for, were he verily persuaded that he hath to do with an all-seeing and an all-knowing God, would he dare any more to harbor unclean, sensual, and revengeful thoughts and affections, than to perpetrate those sins in act to which these tend? Would he dare suffer his heart to run over with gall and bitterness, and think all well, whilst his tongue dropped honey? Would he dare sin in secret, though he could lock himself up in the center of the earth, and wrap himself in impenetrable darkness, any more than in the sight of the sun, and the confluence of people? Would he dare offer unto God the husk and shell of a duty; and, in the mean time, whilst perhaps he is praying, his heart and soul, which God chiefly regards, shall be engaged in deep discourse and communication with the devil? Did he believe, that he is always under the eye of an all-knowing God; a God, who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins; a God, that looks through our souls more clearly than we can through the air, and accurately discerns and observes every mote and atom stirring there; could he be so grossly foolish as to think, that he would be put off with such mimical and apish shows, instead of solid, real, and substantial piety, consisting chiefly in the conformity of the soul and affections unto the divine purity? But the truth is, every hypocrite is an atheist: and though, for some sordid ends, he may fawn upon God and flatter him, yet he disbelieves his glorious attributes, and none more than this of his omniscience; and, in his heart, speaks the same blasphemy with those wretches, Ps. lxxiii. 11; "How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?" and therefore satisfies himself with plausible shows and fair pretences, and seeks to hide his nakedness under the fig-leaves of an external and counterfeit sanctity; and all his religion and devotion is indeed but putting tricks upon God, whom he thinks it is as easy to delude, as to juggle with men. If, then, you would glorify the omniscience of God, let all your thoughts, and affections, and de-

sires, and ends, every motion both of your outward and inward man, be ordered as in his sight and under his observation. Say with thyself, "How shall I allow such vain and foolish surmises? How can I yield to this temptation, though it offer me all the advantages of secrecy and retirement? How can I content myself to make the service of God only a lip-labor, or a bodily exercise? No: my God looks upon me, and ponders my heart and my ways: that God, whose eye is more effectual to deter me from any sinful and unworthy act, than if the eyes of all the angels in heaven or of men on earth were fixed upon me. My God and my conscience are a theater to me: they are more than if all the world besides saw me; and, in comparison with these, to sin in the open view of all the world is but to sin in secret." Such reflections as these declare that thou dost highly adore and honor the omniscience of God, when thou art thus careful to approve thyself, in all thy cogitations and actions, to his all-seeing eye.

(4thly) Another way to glorify the omniscience of God, is, by a frequent and conscientious performance of duties in secret.

When there is no other witness to behold us but God and our own souls, then let us pour out our hearts and unbosom all our wants and desires before him. And indeed that Christian, who hath deeply imprinted this attribute upon his thoughts, will find it a most powerful and effectual means, as to keep him from sinning in secret, so to quicken him to pray in secret. Hypocrites will often be very pompous and splendid in the performance of public duties, where they have a ring of people to admire and celebrate their gifts, and from whom they may think to raise a reputation for their parts and piety: this will make them to expatiate and pour forth such a torrent of raptures and heavenly expressions, that they themselves may seem to be ravished with spiritual joy and sweetness, and their auditors may be really so: but all this may be only ostentation, not devotion; not because God observes them, but because men observe them: and therefore our Saviour makes it the proper character of a pharisaical hypocrite, to pray only in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, (as the custom was in those days,) that they might "be seen of men:" Mat. vi. 5: they made a mere stage-play of religion; and then acted best, when they were most crowded with spectators: but follow these men home to their houses, to their closets; and, if we had but a cranny through which to behold them in their retirements, how seldom or never addressing themselves to God, and praying unto him in secret, when they think no eye sees

them but God's! for they pray, not so much that God may hear them, as men; and, whatsoever they seem with so much earnestness and importunity to beg of him, yet indeed the only thing they pray for is, that they may be admired and applauded. But, a truly pious and sincere Christian is not only zealous and affectionate in public duties in the congregation, and in private duties in his own family, where he hath witnesses of his devotion; but he considers that he prays to God and not to men: and, therefore, when he is withdrawn from the sight and notice of others, he applies himself unto God with the same zeal and fervency of spirit as before; well knowing, that, in duties performed unto God, the secrecy or publicity of them ought to make no difference in our affections. And therefore observe, that, so much as thou dost abate thy holy warmth and fervency in secret duties, which used to carry thee out with great enlargement and vigor when thou hast joined with others; so much of hypocrisy is mingled with thy serving God. Our Saviour hath given us our rule: Mat. vi. 6; "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet: and, when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." Let me, therefore, O Christians, persuade you to a more constant and zealous performance of secret duties; for this is certainly one of the most infallible marks of a sincere heart, that can be given. That Christian cannot be a hypocrite, that is but careful to keep up a lively and vigorous communion with God in secret: whereas, let thy duties else be what they will, never so many and never so gaudy, if they be only performed in the view and sight of others, and thou art not frequent in addressing thyself to God in secret, let me tell thee, it is very possible, yea and very suspicious too, that thou art but a painted hypocrite, a mere gilded professor; that outwardly lookest smooth and shining, but inwardly art full of nothing but corruption and purulency. Go home, therefore, O Christian: enter into thy closet; and, there, when none but thou and thy God are together, freely unlock thy heart, and pour out thy soul before him. What! hast thou no sins to confess, no wants to be supplied, no mercies to beg, no complaints to make, no tears to shed, but what it is fit others should be privy to? Certainly, if thou hast not, it is a sign, that thou art but too much a stranger at home, and very little conversant with thine own soul. However, do it that thou mayest glorify God: for he is "thy Father, which seeth in secret;" and thou canst by no way more honor his omniscience, than by thus acknowledging that he sees and hears thee, when there is no one else that can see and hear thee.

(5thly) Thou glorifiest the omniscience of God, when, under lying slanders and false accusations, thou canst command and calm all the turbulencies of thy passions, by appealing to the all-seeing eye of God, who knoweth the innocence of thy soul.

Indeed, this is the great support of a true Christian when he is wrongfully aspersed, that he can retire inwardly into the retreat of a clear conscience: that he can remit his cause to God, and leave his vindication to him, who knows how he is traduced and wronged. It will be a greater comfort to us, that God knows us innocent; than a trouble and vexation, that wicked men conspire to report us guilty. Indeed, if they could persuade God to believe them too, it might be just cause of grief and disquiet: but what great matter is it, though a company of vain, giddy, and unreasonable men take up and spread abroad lying rumors concerning us? Thou art not to stand or fall, according to their votes: and, though their slanderous tongues may blot out thy good name here on earth, yet they can never blot thy name out of the book of life. And, therefore, herein honor the omniscience of God, by bearing up cheerfully and boldly; and, if they will cast dirt upon thee, let it be their own, and not thine: this, though it may make thee look more unlovely in the eyes of men, yet it will not do so in the eyes of God. Show by thy generous despising of all their malicious censures and reproaches, that thou dost more respect and value the omniscience of God, who knows thee innocent; than all the slanders of men, who report thee guilty. Thus Jeremiah appeals unto God: Jer. xx. 10, 12; "I heard the defaming of many....report, say they, and we will report it....but, O Lord of Hosts, thou that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart....unto thee have I opened my cause."

5thly. Another attribute of God, which we are to glorify, is his truth and veracity.

This is an essential property of the divine nature; and therefore he is styled a "God of truth:" Ps. xxxi. 5; and a "God, that cannot lie: Tit. i. 2, and Heb. vi. 18, it is said it is "impossible for God to lie."

Truth, or veracity, is nothing else but the conformity of our speeches to the being of things: as, when we affirm that which is or deny that which is not, then are our speeches true. And, therefore, it is impossible for God to lie; for he cannot speak things otherwise than they be, who speaks them into being.

Now the first and general way of glorifying the truth of God, is, by imitating him in this attribute, and speaking truth one to

another. St. Peter hath given us a rule, which, though in a more restrained and appropriate sense, it may especially concern the ministers of the gospel, the dispensers of the word of truth; yet, I see not but that it may properly appertain unto all men: 1 Pet. iv. 11: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God..... that God, in all things, may be glorified, through Jesus Christ:" that is, let his speeches be as true and certain, as if they were divine oracles. Many indeed there are, who speak like the oracles of Apollo; ambiguously, equivocally, and falsely: but, to speak like the oracles of God, is to declare things as they are, simply and nakedly. And, if thou either knowest not the things in question, or upon some prudential considerations art unwilling to disclose them, either an acknowledgment thereof or a modest silence must be chosen by thee, without any crafty or guileful windings and circumlocutions prejudicial to the truth. By this means, saith the Apostle, God will be glorified: as indeed he is, whensoever we endeavor to imitate him in his communicable attributes and perfections.

But, more particularly, God's truth is especially seen in three things. In his predictions, promises, and threatenings; all which we ought to glorify.

(1st) Glorify the truth and veracity of God in his predictions, by adoring his faithfulness in the wonderful accomplishment of those many prophecies, which have already been exactly and punctually fulfilled.

And, indeed, when we consider those prophetic passages in the Old Testament concerning Christ; the whole history of whose birth, the whole course of whose life, and the whole tragedy of whose death, were, so many ages before, clearly foretold, some declared by express prophecy, some signified by typical prefigurations; we cannot but admire the wonderful exactness of divine veracity, in so critically accomplishing every particular of what he had so long before declared should come to pass. And, truly, it is one, among many other excellencies of the gospel of St. Matthew, that he doth so plainly accommodate the historical passages concerning our Saviour's birth, life, and death, to the prophetic predictions of them in the Old Testament: his birth, by a virgin: Isa. vii. 14; the place of it, Bethlehem: Micah v. 2; God's calling him back out of Egypt: Hos. xi. 1; the bloody massacre of the infants; Jer. xxxi. 15; the actions of his forerunner, John the Baptist: Isa. xl. 3; his dwelling in Capernaum: Isa. ix. 1, 2; and so, throughout the whole contexture of the history of Christ, the

evangelist compares the prophecies with the actual accomplishment of them, for the firmer establishing of our faith; and the clearer evidence that he was the true Messiah, whom that God, who cannot lie, had foretold should come in the fulness of time. As for those predictions concerning the state of the Church here on earth, which have not as yet received their accomplishment, and therefore are the more dark and obscure unto us, many of which are contained in the Revelations, we ought to glorify the truth and veracity of God, by an unwavering belief, that they also shall be punctually fulfilled in their due season, and that not a word which he hath spoken shall fall to the ground in vain.

(2dly) Glorify the truth and faithfulness of God in his promises, by a confident expecting of those blessings, which he hath engaged himself to bestow upon us, if we be careful to perform the conditions upon which his promises are made.

If the condition be fulfilled on our part, the promise shall certainly be fulfilled on God's. Hath he promised eternal life to those who believe? Assure thyself, that, if thou believest, thou shalt as certainly inherit it, as if thou wert even now glorified: for it is "eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, hath promised." Or, hath he promised any temporal mercy and good things? That he will provide for thee, and protect thee? Even these promises are conditional also, if so be they may be for thy good and his glory, which if he who is the all-wise God sees, thou shalt infallibly obtain whatsoever thou desirest; if not, thou mayest very well be contented, for thou dost but desire a harm and damage to thyself. Here, then, glorify God, by resting thy soul and casting all thine affairs upon his promises. Thou hast his truth and veracity bound to make them good; and that, certainly, is such a precious pawn, as that he never hath nor ever will forfeit it.

(3dly) Glorify God's veracity in his threatenings; trembling at the dreadful denunciations of his judgments, both temporal and eternal, against obstinate and impenitent sinners.

Which if thou dost in truth and sincerity of heart, this will fright thee from the commission of those sins, against which those heavy plagues and judgments are threatened: for, let him pretend what he will, that man doth not believe that God is true in all his threatenings, who yet will dare to continue one day or hour longer in his sins impenitently. If neither the mercies nor the terrors of the Lord can persuade us to a holy life, we do but virtually and interpretatively give God the lie; and do not believe, that he is either faithful to his promises, or just and true to his threatenings.

6thly. Another attribute in God, which we ought to glorify, is his Almighty power and sovereignty.

Indeed, there is a difference between these two. For,

First. Power denotes only a natural strength and ability to do a thing; but sovereignty includes in it a legal right and authority. And,

Secondly. Power may be found separate from authority. And, so, indeed, it is in the greatest princes and potentates on earth; all whose might and strength above other men consists, not in their natural, but only in their civil and political power and jurisdiction. And so, likewise, in God, his power and his sovereignty bear not the same date, neither are they of equal duration: for God was infinite in power eternally before the creation of the world; and, had he never exerted his power in any of those wonderful effects of it which we behold, yet he had been forever the same Almighty God that now he is: but sovereignty and dominion are ascribed unto him, in time; and, in the very notion of them, do necessarily presuppose the being of some subjects, over which he is the sovereign Lord. Again,

Thirdly. God's power is of a much larger extent than his sovereignty. For his power extends unto all things possible, since he is able to create many more worlds, and far more noble and excellent creatures in this, than he hath done: but his sovereignty extends only to things actual. Whence our Saviour argues, Luke xx. 38; "He is not a God of the dead," (*i. e.* those, who so die as utterly to perish and come to nothing, as the Sadducees thought the souls of men did,) "but of the living, for all live unto him."

The power of God is an absolute essential attribute of the divine nature; forever invariably appertaining to him, whether he express it in any acts of creation and providence or no; but sovereignty is a relative denomination, resulting from God's temporal acts of disposing and governing his creatures, according to the counsels of his own will and the rule of his immutable justice. But, because these two are so near allied, his sovereignty being founded upon his power, and his power expressed in the acts of his sovereignty and dominion, I shall therefore consider them together.

That God is glorious in this attribute of his power, the Scripture doth everywhere abundantly attest; styling him the Almighty God, and ascribing strength and power unto him. Yea, and that he accounts it a very considerable part of his glory, see Ps. lxii. 11; "God hath spoken once, yea twice have I heard this, that

power belongeth unto God;" and Ps. xxix. 1: "Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength:" as if he had said, You, that are the great and mighty ones upon earth, who make whole nations obedient to your beck and tremble at your frown, yet boast not yourselves of the greatness of your power: there is a Supreme God above, who if you "speak of strength, lo, he is strong:" Job ix. 19: a God, whose hand and whose voice can shake both heaven and earth out of their place, and make the haughtiest potentates lick the dust before him. Ascribe, therefore, unto him praise and glory, by ascribing unto him might and power; not only that stinted and limited power with which you, who are but his under officers, are invested; but a strength and power infinitely surmounting yours, who conceit yourselves so mighty. For your power can come into no comparison with God's power; no, nor hold out against that which is accounted his very weakness; 1 Cor. i. 25: "The weakness of God is stronger than men."

How then shall we glorify this almighty power of the great God?

(1st) By an humble and awful adoration of it; in all those wonderful effects, whereby God hath expressed the infinite greatness of his power.

And, here, thou canst not want objects, if thou hast but an affection and piety to venerate God in them. The whole world, and every creature in it, is a most evident demonstration of the divine power: "His eternal power and godhead are clearly seen..... by the things that are made:" Rom. i. 20. Cast but thine eyes to that vast expanse of the heavens: what a beautiful canopy dost thou there behold; all studded with gems: and almost every star in that general muster of the heavenly host, far greater than the whole earth! Consider this solid and massy globe on which we live, how it hangs immovably in the midst of an ocean of soft and yielding air, through which all other bodies easily cut their passage: what foundations, what pillars hath it to rest upon; but only that almighty word, which first fixed it, and still preserves it in its place and station? Consider the various kinds of creatures, that God hath breathed forth upon the face of the earth in divers shapes and sizes; some voluminous, some contracted; in both which his power is equally seen, but his art and skill rather glorious in the latter. Whence is all this frame and complicated machine of the world, made up of so many different parts, and yet all set together in such an admirable order and harmony? If we run it up to its first original, we shall

find all things to have been once a mere nothing. And was it not infinite power, that could constrain nothing to yield so many, and such beautiful beings? That the heavens should, out of nothing, spread abroad their liquid crystals, which Elihu therefore most elegantly and naturally compares to "a molten looking-glass?" Job xxxvii. 18. That the earth should, out of nothing, gather all its thick parts together; and, as the sediment of the world, compact and settle itself in the center of the universe? Certainly these, and infinite others, are most stupendous demonstrations of his infinite power. Nay, not only these great things, but the smallest and most despised works of God, declare that he is almighty: "Magnus in magnis, nec minor in minimis:" there is not the least spire of grass, that sprouts out of the earth: not the least fly, that is animated by the sun; but it may be a sufficient conviction of the folly of atheism, and cause us to fall down and adore that God, who created and formed it. Glorify, therefore, the power of God, by a serious and pious contemplation of these his wonderful works. Wheresoever you go, and whatsoever you see and converse with, you have this book open before you, wherein you may read enough to admonish and instruct you in this attribute. It is time well spent, and thought well employed, when, from the works of creation and providence, from the frame of the world and the government of it, the various kinds of creatures which ye behold and the various revolutions of affairs which ye hear of abroad, you return into your own hearts, and season them with awful thoughts and reflections on the almighty power of the great God.

(2dly) Glorify the power and sovereignty of God, by using that power and authority, which he hath given you, in subordination unto his.

Art thou a magistrate or a parent, or master of a family? Exercise thine authority, as one, that is entrusted with it by the great Sovereign of heaven and earth. Exercise it so as thou wouldest suppose God himself would do, were he immediately to govern those, whom he hath now committed to thy charge: for God hath given thee authority, that thou shouldest rule in his stead: thou art deputed, under him, in the place wherein he hath set thee. And, certainly, it is a great dishonor and disparagement to the sovereignty of God, if thou, who art entrusted with the management of it, shouldest use it to quite contrary purposes to what God himself would do. If thou either encouragest sin and wickedness, or connivest at it in those who are subject to thee; what is this, but, by a

practical kind of blasphemy, to make God's authority patronize what it would punish?

(3dly) Glorify the power of God, by relying on him for safeguard, and deliverance out of all thy dangers.

When Nebuchadnezzar threatened those three heroes with his burning furnace, unless they would fall down and worship his golden image, see with what an undaunted courage they answer the menaces of the enraged king: Dan. iii. 16; "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter." Whence this confidence, to despise the threats of so great a king, and the terrors of so cruel a death; but only that they glorified the infinite power of God, who could preserve them, either from the flames or in them? v. 17; "If it be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace." So, likewise, in all the dangers to which you can be exposed for the sake of God and of a good conscience, glorify his almighty power, who is able to deliver in the greatest extremities, and will, if it be best, find a way for you to escape.

(4thly) Glorify the almighty power of God, by fearing to provoke his wrath against you.

For who knoweth the power of his wrath? as the Psalmist speaks, Ps. xc. 11. Indeed, a weak impotent anger, that can only vent itself in exclamations and railings, is justly ridiculous and contemptible: but who would not tremble to provoke that God, whose anger, as it is always just, so it is almighty, and able to wreak its revenge upon the stoutest sinners in their eternal ruin and destruction? It is a most desperate folly to incense that God, whom we cannot withstand: therefore the Apostle expostulates, 1 Cor. x. 2: "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?" as if he should say, "Indeed, if thou canst try it out with the Almighty, if thou canst wrest the sword of his justice out of his hands, if thou canst dash thyself against the Rock of Ages and be not broken in pieces, then thou mayest go on boldly in thy sins, and prosper: but, alas! for thee, a weak, feeble creature, who art "crushed before the moth," as Job speaks, whose life is "but a vapor," a poor thing who art just not nothing only by the creating word of God; it is a most deplorable madness for thee to muster up thy forces, and set thyself in battle-array against that great God, who can look thee dead and speak thee into hell. And, yet, such is our wretched stupidity, that we dare this great and mighty God to the combat, every day and hour: every sin we commit is a challenge and defiance sent to heaven: we defy his power and wrath, and dare the Almighty to do his worst. Certainly, did

sinners but seriously consider the infinite power of God, would they not fear lest the very next sin they commit, some remarkable vengeance should be inflicted upon them? Lest God should suddenly smite them through; cause the earth to open its mouth, and swallow them up quick into hell; and make them know, by their own woeful experience, that dread power and justice, which they now so vilify and despise? Be persuaded, therefore, O Christians, to glorify this power of the great God, by your holy fear and caution not to provoke and arm it against yourselves. It is our Saviour's counsel, Mat. x. 28, "Fear him, which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell: yea, I say unto you, fear him." Know, that, when thou makest light of sin, thou dost but contemn the power and wrath of God: so often as thou swearest, or liest, or committest any other known wickedness, so often thou openly declarest that thou accountest the wrath of God, hell, and everlasting torments but a trifle, not worth the regard of a generous and daring sinner. And thou, who perhaps art scared from the commission of many a sin, through fear of the magistrate's power to punish thee, but boldly committest others which cannot fall under his power or cognizance, what else dost thou, but openly testify that the power of God is not so tremendous and dreadful, as the power of a weak worm like thyself? And what a scorn and reproach dost thou hereby cast upon that glorious attribute! But, if thou wouldest glorify it, declare to all the world, that thou ownest his infinite power, which is able to destroy, to damn thee every moment, by thy holy fear to offend so great and so terrible a God.

(5thly) Glorify the power and sovereignty of God, by a constant and conscientious obedience to all his laws.

He, who is the great Sovereign of the world, must needs have prescribed us some rules to direct us in our obedience. And this he hath done in his word, which is the statute-book of his kingdom: in the Scriptures is contained the whole body and system of those laws, which our great King hath enacted. Now the best way for us to acknowledge the sovereignty of God, is, by yielding all ready and cheerful obedience to those laws, which he hath imposed on us. Then do we indeed declare that we own him for our sovereign, when we resign ourselves in an universal obedience unto him, and are careful to perform whatsoever he hath enjoined us; as well those duties which immediately concern the service of our Lord and Master, as those which concern our fellow-subjects and servants: but, if we willingly fail in the observance of any of these, we shake his yoke from off our necks, and withdraw our-

selves from under his jurisdiction and command. And thou, who thus disownest him from being thy sovereign Lord, will at last find him to be thy severe judge; and, although thou now refusest to submit thyself to the power of his grace, thou shalt be forced to bow, and sink, and eternally perish under the power of his wrath.

7thly. Another (and it is the last of which I shall speak) attribute of the divine essence, which we ought to glorify, is his justice and equity.

Now, although there be no other attribute more conversant with mankind than this of the divine justice, yet neither is there any that is of a more abstruse speculation, or more entangled with perplexed doubts and difficulties, whensoever we attempt a scholastical disquisition of it. It is like the sun, nothing more seen than its light, nothing less seen than itself: the most apparent, and yet the most hidden; the most obvious, and yet the most abstruse perfection of the divine nature.

It is not pertinent to my present design, to engage in those many critical distinctions and disputes, which are by divers diversely given us concerning the justice of God: my work is more immediately practical.

(1st) Yet because we ought to have right apprehensions of that object, which we are to glorify; and we cannot glorify God as a just God, unless we have beforehand conceived some proper notions what this justice is; therefore take notice briefly, that the justice of God is twofold.

[1st] His essential justice; which is nothing else but the infinite rectitude of his nature, according to his own eternal ideas of himself.

This is not that, which we are now taking into consideration. For as, among men, that, which Aristotle calls the νομιμον δικαιοσυνην, an universal justice respecting the conformity of every action of our lives to law and reason, is not so much any one virtue, as all; so, likewise, this essential and absolute justice of God is not so much any one attribute of the divine nature, as a complexion of them all: for it is the due habitude and proportion of God's infinite perfections to the only rule of them, which is himself.

[2dly] There is a moral, or relative justice in God, which respects his transactions and dealings with his creatures.

Now, as among men, justice is that virtue, which habitually sways them to render to every one his own; so, likewise, in God towards men, that disposition, which, if we may so speak, inclines

him to render to every one his own, is that which we call the justice of God. Here two things are to be observed.

*a.* The foundation of his justice is his sapience and will.

For God lies under no obligation to his creatures, antecedent to the free determinations of his own will. It is just with God, to punish some men with eternal torments: why? Because they are sinners, and punishment is their due; and, therefore, in inflicting it, he doth but render unto them what is their own. But, if you ask farther, whence it proceeds that wrath and punishment should be their due, we can give no other answer to this, but only because the will of God hath so constituted and ordained it, as a congruous reward for such actions. So that whatsoever God wills is just and equal; not simply as he wills it only, but as his will is guided by his infinite wisdom, which dictates such proceedings to be fitting and conformable to the divine nature; and therefore God wills them as just. For, because the divine wisdom sees it congruous that obstinate and impenitent sinners should be eternally punished, therefore the divine will determines to punish them, and their punishment is an act of justice.

*b.* The rule of divine justice is his word.

For God proceeds according to this word, in all his dealings with us. His word contains in it both promises and threatenings; and, to fulfil both, God hath obliged himself by his truth and veracity. And, consequently, either the mercy promised or the punishment threatened is our due, according as we either obey or transgress his word: and, these being our due, it is but justice in God to render them unto us according as our works have been. Indeed, the schools have well determined, that there can be no commutative justice in God: *i. e.*, such justice, as consists in an equal exchange of things between party and party, giving and taking a like value: for the Apostle hath told us, Rom. xi. 35: "Who hath first given to him? and it shall be recompensed unto him again. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things."

But there is a distributive justice in God, whereby, as a judge, he recompenseth us proportionably to our actions; which justice is regulated by the promises and threatenings of his word.

And it is twofold: *remunerative* justice, which assigns us a blessed reward, according to our faith and obedience; and, *punitive* justice, which inflicts upon us eternal and insupportable punishments, according to our impenitence and rebellions.

And both these the Apostle mentions together, 2 Thess. i. 6, 7:

"It is a righteous," or a just "thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you: And to you, who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven."

And thus I have, as plainly as I could with so much brevity shown you what this attribute of the divine justice is.

(2dly) Let us next consider how it ought to be glorified by us.

[1st] The first and chief way, is, by our conformity to it.

For justice and equity is a communicable attribute of the divine nature: and the best way to glorify such, is not only to represent them in ourselves, by admiring and adoring them; but to represent them in ourselves, by transcribing and imitating them. Then dost thou glorify the justice of God, when thou endeavorest, within thy sphere and according to thy proportion, to be thyself just. God is just in rendering to every man his own; whether it be his own by merit, or by mercy, by desert, or by promise: He renders, saith the Apostle, "to every man according to his deeds:" Rom. ii. 6: according to the merit of their deeds: so, he renders "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, to every soul of man that doeth evil:" and, according to the mercy of his promise, he renders "glory, honor, and peace to every man that worketh good." Imitate God, in rendering to every one their own: keep nothing from them which is their due, except it be the retribution of evil for evil; for this recompense God hath reserved to himself.

Now that is said to be another man's, to which he hath a title. And, if the title remain in him, but the possession in thee, so long thou art unjust, and dishonorest God, as well as wrongest thy brother; as thou detainest from him what is rightfully his, contrary to his will and desire.

There are two things, that give a man a title to any possession; law, and conscience. First. Human Laws.

God's laws are the rule of his justice towards men, and men's laws are the rule of their justice one towards another. These set bounds to our property, and determine what is ours, and what not: and, whosoever he be, that breaks through this fence, and either violently or fraudulently seizes upon that, which the laws under which he lives hath assigned to his brother, he is an unjust person, that transgresseth not only the laws of men, but that sovereign law of God, "Thou shalt not steal." God's law commands us not to take what is another's; but man's law shows us what is another's; man's law makes property, and God's law secures it: else, why may not any enter into your houses, and take thence what best likes them? For what makes it yours, more than theirs? Is it, that you have acquired it? By the

same reason it will be as rightfully theirs, when they have gotten it: and so the whole earth would be filled with violence, and rapine, and confusion, did not laws determine what is yours, and what not; and parcel out the common goods of nature, assigning to every one his share, which for another to invade and take from him, is rapine or deceit. And, therefore, it is an unjust thing, to alienate any possession of another, upon pretence that it is superfluous, or may be employed to better uses, or that the owners are wicked and undeserving: for, be the persons never so wicked, their estates never so redundant or misemployed, what they hold is as much their own, as those few things which perhaps thou art owner of, and are barely necessary for the sustentation of thy life; and, if thou shouldest attempt to deprive them of any part thereof, it is as much injustice, as if any should attempt to take from thee the only piece of bread by which thou livest. Indeed, the laws, under which we live, may and often do alter the property: so that what was mine before, ceaseth to be so when the law hath assigned it to another; and I am unjust and guilty of theft, if I detain it from him: it is no longer mine, but his, when the same authority, that gave me title to it before, hath now transferred that title from me to him. Hence we have that exhortation of the Apostle, an exhortation very needful to be pressed upon us in these unjust days, wherein men are utterly unwilling to be guided by any laws besides their self-will and self-interest; Rom. xiii. 7: "Render, therefore, to all their dues; tribute, to whom tribute is due; custom, to whom custom; fear, to whom fear; honor, to whom honor." You see here, that tribute and custom are called dues: and what else makes them due, but only the law of man? And, certainly, if the law of man can make a tribute out of mine estate, or a custom out of my goods, to be due to another, suppose the prince or any other magistrate, am not I guilty of injustice and theft, if I detain it from him; yea, altogether as much as if I should steal from him, what already he hath in his possession? Thus you see how human laws confer right, and title; and, therefore, we are bound in justice, to render to every one according to their prescription.

Secondly. But, there may be several cases, unto which the law cannot particularly reach, wherein we may be unjust towards others. For, not only the law, but conscience may confer a title upon others: and this ought to oblige us, when, many times, the law cannot.

Thus, what thou hast promised to another, thou standest bound

to perform, although possibly he cannot prove that promise by any other witnesses, than those thousand of thine own conscience. And many other such like instances may be made, wherein conscience and equity require thee to render that unto another, which, perhaps, law and judicial process cannot compel thee to do: but, yet, if thou art in thine own conscience persuaded, that thy brother hath a better right and title to what thou possessest than thyself, although possibly he knows not of it, or could never recover it by a legal course, yet justice binds thee to render it to him: it is his; and the proper office and effect of justice is, to render to every one his own.

Let us now proceed to consider the kinds of justice; which are two, commutative or distributive.

*a.* We ought to glorify God by a commutative justice; rendering to every one his due, in our bargains, sales, and commerce: wherein we ought to observe an exact equality, between what we give, and what we take; otherwise we cannot but be unjust, and wrong either ourselves or others.

This is a duty, which the very light of nature and the dictates of reason enforce upon us: that, upon which the frame of all correspondence and transactions in the world doth depend: and, whosoever he be, that openly transgresseth the rules of this justice, is looked upon as an infamous person; shunned and avoided by all, as one not fit for human conversation: neither, indeed, is he; for this kind of injustice, if it were grown into common practice, would soon turn the world into a wilderness, and men into savage beasts, ravening and preying one upon another; and nothing, that we possessed, could be secured from violence or fraud. Neither is this justice only a dictate of the law and light of nature, but God hath added many sanctions to it by his express commands; especially that serious and weighty one, 1 Thess. iv. 6; "Let no man go beyond or defraud his brother in any matter; because that the Lord is the avenger of all such." And indeed there is scarce any one sin that is more injurious unto God, as well as unto men, than this of fraud and injustice: it wrongs him in many of his attributes: it heinously affronts his sovereignty: when a little inconsiderable gain shall tempt us to violate his laws, and despise his authority, and hearken to the imperious commands of our own base and sordid covetousness, rather than to the commands of the great God: it calls in question his fidelity, nay rather, it plainly demonstrates that we do utterly disbelieve it; for, did we think that there were any truth, either in his threatenings or his promises, should we be so foolish, as, for a present petty gain, to forfeit the hopes of a future inheritance

and inexhaustible treasures in heaven; or to incur the certain danger of eternal destruction in hell, where we shall woefully refund all that we have either gotten or kept unjustly? It directly contradicts the mercy and goodness of God, which teacheth and obligeth us to be so far from wronging others, as to be bountiful and beneficent to them: and, therefore, in all respects, injustice towards men is a high injury done against God himself. And, yet, how common a sin is this in the world! Are not all places filled with sad complaints of wrong, violence, and oppression: each snatching what they can from others; and taking all advantages, either from the weakness or inadvertence of their brethren, to overreach and defraud them? A sin, shall I say, unworthy of Christians? Yea, unworthy of men; contrary to the very constitution of civil societies: but infinitely shameful and opprobrious in those that profess the gospel, who, by this means, bring an indelible blot and reproach upon religion; and, by their extortion, oppression, and injustice, open the mouths of too many, to blaspheme the holy name of God, whilst they look upon an eminent and glorious profession only as a more cleanly art to cheat and cozen. Be persuaded, therefore, O Christians, to glorify the justice of God, by the justice and equity of your dealings with men. Let it appear by all your actions, that you do acknowledge there is a just God in heaven; a God, who critically observeth all that you do, and who will render unto you according to your works: and that, for the awe and reverence of his impartial justice, you dare not do any thing that is unjust towards men. This is the way to glorify him, far more effectually than by all the encomiums and verbal representations, which thou canst make of his justice: for, how can others be persuaded that thou dost believe there is a just God, whilst thou thyself, notwithstanding all thy professions, art unjust, cruel, covetous, taking or detaining from others what is their due, as if the only reward thou expectedst were to live upon the spoil? Are these proper actions to convince them, that there is a just God, or that thou dost think him so? Nay, rather, will it not prove a strong temptation to them, to call the justice of God into question, when they see thee so long escape unpunished; and to conclude, as many upon the like account have done, that certainly the world is not guided by sovereign justice and equity, but only by mere chance and casualty? The only way to work a reverential esteem of the justice of God in the minds of men, is, to be as punctual in our dealings with them, as we would desire they should be with us; yea, to be as just to them, as we would desire God should be merciful to us. This will convince the world, that

certainly there is a supreme justice that overawes us, that we dare not take those advantages, which the ignorance or oversight of others puts into our hands to defraud them; and that we do indeed believe, that there is a day coming, wherein a thousand witnesses shall be produced to testify what agreements and compacts we have made, where the false weights shall be themselves weighed, and the scanty measures themselves meted, by a standard that is infallibly true, and all the controversies of right and equity shall be decided to the eternal shame and horror of those who have done the wrong.

*b.* We ought to glorify the justice of God by our distributive justice; rendering unto all men the rewards and punishments, that are due unto their actions.

This part of justice belongs not to private Christians, but only to the magistrate: for he is God's executive; and rewards and punishments are consigned over unto him: Rom. xiii. 3, 4. If thou dost well, "he is the minister of God to thee for good: but, if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God; a revenger, to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." Indeed, a magistrate's office should be a clear type and representation of the justice of God, and human judicatories emblems of the great and last assize; and the administration of justice here should bear an exact proportion to that strict justice which God will execute, when all the world shall appear before him to receive their doom. There should not an offender escape deserved punishment, especially those, who are presumptuous and peremptory upon their greatness and the eminence of their quality, who make it their sport to baffle the law and outface justice. God's justice is impartial; and spares neither the poor for pity, nor the rich for fear: but will eternally retribute to every one, according to what he has done. And if thou, to whom he hath committed the administration of his justice, shalt dispense it with respect of persons; either moved with commiseration, or interest, or base fear, or any other by or sinister end; thou highly dishonorest him, distributing that for the justice of God, which is but the injustice and partiality of man. It hath been an old complaint, that laws were but like cobwebs; which served indeed, to hamper the smaller flies, whilst the greater and stronger securely break through them. Let it be your care and endeavor to remove this obloquy; and, by a severe animadversion, not only on poor trembling offenders, but on haughty and audacious criminals, who think to outbrave authority with their greatness, make

it appear that you look upon yourselves as the dispensers of God's justice, which respects them no more than the most contemptible wretch that lives upon the face of the earth.

[2dly] When the divine justice hath found thee out, then thou oughtest to glorify it, by a free and full confession of thine offences.

Now there are two ways, in which the justice of God doth find out sinners:

Sometimes, by inflicting remarkable plagues and judgments upon them: plagues, that carry in them a great correspondence and alliance to the sins they have committed, so that they cannot but read their very crimes in their punishments. And,

Sometimes, by detecting their crimes which they thought were committed in secret, and bringing them to condign punishment for them. And, indeed, strange are the instances, that might be given, of God's marvellous providence in this particular; especially in bringing murder and bloodshed to light.

Now, one or other of these ways, men's sins and God's justice will usually find them out. "Be sure your sin will find you out:" Numb. xxxii. 23. And, therefore, in these cases, glorify the justice of God, by a free and full confession of thy guilt.

*a.* If God lay any sore plague and judgment upon thee, go and humble thyself and confess thy sin unto him in secret; and pray unto him chiefly that he would take away thy sin, and then thy punishment.

Or, if this will not give sufficient ease to thine afflicted conscience, take unto thee some serious, prudent Christian; inform him how the case stands, between God and thy soul: beg the assistance of his advice and prayers. This is the Apostle's direction, James v. 16: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." This is the way to give God the glory of his justice, when thou shalt fall down and acknowledge, that what he hath brought upon thee is just and righteous, and the due reward of thy sins. And, indeed, God doth many times inflict such peculiar punishments upon us, which do indicate and point out our sins; as it were on purpose to extort his glory from us, in our confession of his justice. Sometimes, he punisheth us after the same manner, in which we have offended him. We have a famous instance for this in Adonibezek, Judges i. 7: "Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table;" and he, suffering the like from the Israelites, acknowledgeth the justice of God in thus repaying his cruelty: "as I have done, so God hath re-

quited me." Thus God dealt with the Egyptians: they cruelly murder the male children of the Israelites; and, therefore, God slays all their first-born. And, sometimes again, judgments carry a likeness unto the sin, though not in the very same thing, yet in many circumstances of it: as when God smites men in the same subject, object, time, instruments, or members of sinning: thus David grows proud of the number of his subjects; and, therefore, God sweeps them away by a pestilence, and makes him subtract threescore and ten thousand from the account: he dotes on Absalom, and God ordains Absalom to rebel against and endeavor to dethrone him: so, that very hand, which Jeroboam stretched forth to lay hold on the prophet, God withers and dries up. Now if any such judgment hath befallen you, that carries on it the very stamp and impression of the sin for which God inflicts it, adore and glorify his justice; fall down before him, and confess that he is righteous and holy in all that he hath brought upon you.

*b.* If the divine justice hath so found thee out, as to detect thee, and bring thee to temporal punishment for thy crimes, then glorify it, by a free and public confession of them to all the world.

Strive not to cover the sore, which God lays open; but take to thyself the shame of thine iniquities, and give God the glory of his justice, by acknowledging thy guilt, and admiring his most wise and righteous methods in discovering thee, when thou thoughtest thy wickedness had been hid in darkness and secrecy: so that others may hear; and fear to offend that God, who can, by such unknown ways of his providence, bring to light the hidden things of darkness. Thus, when Achan was miraculously discovered by lot, Joshua exhorts him, chap. vii. 19: "My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done: hide it not from me:" which accordingly we find he did, and we may therefore hope well of his pardon. It is a most desperate folly of many stupid wretches, to persist obstinately in denying those crimes of which they are evidently convicted; and, that their names may escape the infamy, bind the guilt of them fast upon their souls forever.

[3dly] If thou art unjustly wronged and oppressed by others, glorify the justice of God, in committing thy vindication to him.

Seek not to revenge thyself; for, by so doing, thou dost but take thy cause out of God's hands, who is better able to plead it for thee. If thou studiest how to recompense evil for evil, thou disparagest the justice of God, and suspectest that it will not do thee

right; and, therefore, thou wilt seek to carve out to thyself what amends thou canst. Certainly he doth most of all honor the justice of God, who, when he hath suffered wrongfully, doth, without any farther care or solicitude, recommend his cause to God. Nor can I approve those, who, when they are injured, do indeed betake them to God; but it is with bitter curses and direful imprecations against those, who have injured them, praying for wrath and vengeance to fall upon them: what! think we that the wrath of God must take fire at ours; and that he must dart down his thunderbolts, according to the guidance and direction of our passions? This were to make the justice of God servile to our affections, and an instrument for our revenge. Indeed, we do often meet in Scripture with such dreadful imprecations, where the saints of God devote his and their implacable enemies to utter ruin and destruction: yet this is no warrant for us to use them too. For, as our Saviour Christ rebuked his disciples who were vexed at the affront they received from a village that would not entertain them, and therefore entreated him to call for fire, as Elias did, to come down and consume them, (their zeal was all in a ferment, and presently boiled up to an intemperate feverish heat,) but our Saviour checks them, and tells them, Luke ix. 55: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of:" intimating that Elijah prayed for fire to come down upon those captains and their companies that were sent to take him, from some extraordinary spirit, and by the mighty guidance and impulse of the Holy Ghost; but they did it only from a private spirit of revenge: so I may say, that those examples, which we have in Scripture, especially in the Psalms, of saints and holy men of God devoting their enemies to ruin, were from the impulse and direction of an extraordinary spirit, unto which we cannot pretend: and, therefore, for us to imitate them, would not be zeal, but wildfire. Our Saviour Jesus Christ, who suffered infinitely greater indignities than any that we can, hath set us another example, when, amidst the rage and insultings of his most bitter enemies, he prays, Luke xxiii. 34, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." And his holy martyr St. Stephen, who was the first that followed our Saviour in the track of his blood, follows him likewise as closely in his example; and, when the stones flew thick about him from their malicious hands, it is said, Acts vii. 60, that "he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Indeed, though it may seem a paradox, yet it is a stated and measured truth, that then thou dost most of all glorify the justice of God, when thou im-

plorest mercy for those who have wronged and injured thee, that God would forgive them and turn their hearts: for, in so praying, what dost thou else, but pray that God's justice may be cleared in clearing thy innocence? If thou canst but pray down mercy upon them, thou wilt also pray down repentance into them; and then thou hast gained the most noble and Christian-like revenge that can be desired.

[4thly] Glorify the justice of God, by endeavoring to make thyself worthy to escape the direful and destructive effects of it.

Thou hast been told how severe and tremendous this justice is. All the astonishing judgments, that have ever befallen any of the sons of men in this life, are but small preludes to it; in comparison with those massy and solid plagues, that are laid up in store to be inflicted on impenitent sinners hereafter in hell: that is the proper region and sphere of justice, where wrath and woe forever triumph, without mixture or abatement. Well now, O soul, is there a way for thee to escape this terrible justice of the great God; and wilt thou not, with the dearest affections of thy heart, close with it and embrace it? What is this, but to slight and disparage the wrath and justice of God? He hath but required faith and obedience from thee; and, upon these, hath promised, that thou shalt never fall a sacrifice to his justice, but be set up a trophy of his grace and mercy; and, certainly, if thou wilt not come up to these terms, it is too evident a sign, that thou despisest his justice, and thinkest it not worth the fearing.

There are several other attributes and perfections of the divine nature, which ought also to be glorified by us: but these, upon which I have already insisted, are the principal; and most frequently occur in the course of our lives, to be observed and imitated by us.

From what hath been said of our glorifying God, I shall deduce this short inference and corollary.

See here, then, what a Christian's life ought to be; only a representation of God.

The divine perfections should shine through all our actions; and whatsoever we do ought to be, either a resemblance of the divine nature, or a declaration of it. We have no other work nor business to do in the world, but to live according to the attributes of God, and to express his life in ours. For what is it to be godly, but to be like unto God? Whilst the children of the devil are like

unto their father, and declare his hellish nature in their hellish lives; all, that are the children of God should be like unto their heavenly Father, and express the virtues of him that "hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light:" as the Apostle speaks, 1 Pet. ii. 9. And, to conclude this, those Christians, who thus make it their constant employment to live on earth as God himself lives in heaven, may, with assured hope and unspeakable comfort, expect to live forever with the Lord.

We have thus considered the duty, to which we are here exhorted, even the great and most comprehensive duty of a Christian's whole life; and have shown you what it is to glorify God. We have considered the object of this duty; God, in all his attributes, both communicable and incommunicable: and have shown you how they ought particularly to be glorified by us.

3. Let us now *consider what the Apostle adds farther in the text,* "Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit," Εν τῳ σωματι και τῳ πνευματι: that is, in your body, and in your soul.

For, by the word *spirit,* the soul of man is here to be understood; as, likewise, in many other places of Scripture: and this, to denote that it is of a refined, incorporeal substance. Sometimes, indeed, the spirit of a man is mentioned in contradistinction, as well to his soul as to his body; so, in that prayer of the Apostle, 1 Thess. v. 23: "I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless." But, here, it must not be understood, as if it were a third essential part of man: but either, according to St. Austin, these words, soul and spirit, are but exegetical one of the other, and signify both the same thing; or, else, by spirit is meant only the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, which St. Paul prays might be preserved entire and blameless in the Thessalonians, as Chrysostom interprets those words; or, else, according to Zanchius, by spirit is meant the superior faculties of the mind, reason and understanding; and, by soul, the inferior faculties, of will, affections, and desires. But, when the Scripture speaks of the *spirit* of a man in distinction only to his *body,* as it doth in my text, it means nothing else but the soul: as including in it, both the superior faculties of the mind, reason and understanding; and the inferior faculties of the will, appetite and affections. So that, to glorify God in our *spirit* and in our *body,* is, to glorify him in our whole man, and all the powers and faculties that we are endowed with. For we are a middle sort of creatures:

neither pure intellectual spirits, as the angels are; nor mere corporeal beings, as inanimate things: but God hath tacked these two extremes together, and made them meet in man; who, by his soul, holds hands with angels, and, by his body, with material creatures.

Hence we may observe, that the whole man, both soul and body, ought to be employed as the instruments of promoting God's honor and glory.

For the clearer prosecution of this, note,

First. That, when we speak of glorifying God in our whole man, both *soul* and *body*, this phrase comprehends under it all those accessory good things, which appertain to either.

Some things are reckoned the natural goods of the soul. such are prudence, sagacity, wit, learning, judgment, &c. Some things are reckoned the natural goods of the body: such are, health, liberty, food, raiment, riches, &c. And some things belong neither properly to the soul, nor to the body; but to the whole *compositum*, or man, consisting of both united together: and such are credit and reputation, honor and dignity, dominion and authority, &c. Now, in all these things, God is to be glorified by us.

Secondly. When we say God is to be glorified by us in our whole man, we must know that there are two ways of glorifying him: either actively, by fulfilling the will of his precepts; or passively, by suffering the will of his purpose.

(1) I shall first speak of glorifying God *actively* in our body and in our spirit, by doing his will.

[1] First, then, every duty of God's immediate service and worship, wherein we draw nigh unto him, requires a joint concurrence both of soul and body to glorify him in it.

Our Saviour Christ calls this service "a yoke:" Mat. xi. 30. And, certainly, it is a yoke, wherein both body and soul must be coupled, and draw together: the soul, indispensably: the body, with a dispensation; but that dispensation granted only in case of mercy or necessity.

1st. In all the duties wherein we address ourselves to God, we ought to glorify him in our souls and spirits.

"God is a spirit," yea, "the God of the spirits of all flesh; and they, that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth," as our Saviour speaks, John iv. 24. And this God hath, with the greatest urgency, required of you, Prov. xxiii. 26: "My son, give me thy heart:" whatsoever else we tender unto God, if this be

wanting, it is but the carcase of a duty. And as, of old, all sacrifices were accounted direful and unacceptable, if the heart could not be found in the slain beast, or any of the inwards were wanting, or tainted, or misplaced: so all thy sacrifices, which thou offerest up to God, are monstrous and unacceptable to him, if the heart be not found in them, and the inwards sound and entire. Thou dealest with God, as he in the apologue with Hercules; who, having vowed to him the one half of what he should find that day, himself eat the kernels, and offered up only the shells of the nuts he found to his deity: so thou dost indeed offer up one half of thyself in the service of God; but it is only thy body, the husk and shell, whilst vain thoughts, or worldly cares, or wicked lusts prey upon and devour thy heart and soul. Thinkest thou, that thy God is such an idol god to be contented with such a part, or that he will be put off with shows and outward appearances? If he knows not thy heart, and the intentions and desires of thy soul, to what purpose dost thou worship him? What do those humble and devout postures signify to him, who, if he sees not deeper and farther than these, sees nothing? Or, if he doth thoroughly discern and accurately scan every the least motion of thy thoughts and affections, woe unto thee, who shalt dare to make religion a piece of stage-play; and, by thy personating and counterfeiting of the saints, think to impose upon the omniscient God, and to pass for such an one indeed in his account. Indeed, hypocrisy is a mere mimical folly; and hypocrites are but like your puppets, that move their eyes and bodies, not from any vital principle within them, but only as they are acted by wires and engines without: so the hypocrite twines his body into many flexible postures of seeming piety and devotion, not from any living principle of grace within, but only as he is moved by some outward wires of advantage or applause. Is this serving and glorifying God? Rather, is it not a mocking and flouting of him to his very face? The Jews never more cruelly mocked our Saviour Jesus Christ, than when "they bowed the knee before him," and bid him, "Hail, king of the Jews:" so, believe it, God will interpret all thy officious gestures, when thou fallest on thy knees, and stylest him Lord and King; he will interpret all to be but a solemn mockery, if thy soul fall not as prostrate before him as thy body, and if thy affections be not elevated unto heaven as well as thy hands and eyes. And, as these hypocritical mimics, who thus pretend to glorify God, do yet really scorn and vilify him more than any: so again, on the other hand, God doth most of all scorn and detest them,

and looks upon them as the most loathsome and ridiculous wicked wretches that are: for, we may observe, that where imitation falls short, the partial defect is worse than a total privation: what beast more deformed in his shape, or more ridiculous in his actions, than a marmoset or ape! and yet none approacheth in a nearer resemblance in both unto man, who is the crown and glory of the visible creation: so, truly, a hypocrite is but the ape of a true Christian, and all his devotion is but an apish imitation of the external acts of piety; which, because they proceed not from an inward participation of the divine nature, are most despicable and deformed in God's account: let them squeeze and writhe their faces into as many forms as they please, and when they fast or pray put on what countenance they will; yet, if their hearts and affections correspond not with their outward semblances, they do but play the antics, they do but grin and make mouths at God. But, yet, alas! who is there among us, that can wholly acquit himself of this? Some, that they might not be thought hypocritical worshippers of God, run into another extreme, and demean themselves rudely and irreverently in his presence: they will not show any devotion that it might be thought they have the more: yet, take them in their most careless and unseemly postures, and is it not hypocritical that they present their bodies and their outward man before the Lord, when their hearts and affections are with the eyes of the fools in the ends of the earth? What is the end of thy coming hither? Is it not to serve and glorify God? If it be not, thy very coming is hypocritical: if it be, all thy wandering thoughts, thy vain and worldly imaginations, thy drowsiness, thy want of attention and affection, is all from the bitter root of thy natural hypocrisy. In prayer, thou ownest the duty by being present at it; and, if thou dost not cordially close with every petition, and, as soon as it comes from the minister's mouth, send it up to heaven from thy very heart, whatsoever thy posture be, thou playest the hypocrite. In hearing, if thou dost not diligently attend to the truths that are delivered, and submit thy will, prejudices, and interests unto the evidence of it, thou hearest hypocritically. And, whatsoever other duty thou performest by thyself, or joinest in with others, so long as thy mind hath been diverted unto other objects, and thy thoughts scattered by other cares, so long hast thou been a hypocrite in that duty; for thou makest an outward show of what is not in thy heart or affections. Well, then, if you would glorify God, fix and engage your spirits in all the duties you perform to him; in prayer, let zeal and affection warm your hearts,

and offer up that spiritual sacrifice with that heavenly fire; think of nothing, but that God to whom you pray, and those blessings for which you pray; hear the truth with as much attention and reverence, as if God were himself speaking to you with his own voice; and mind nothing but how you may understand it for the present, and practise it for the future. In all your duties, bend every power and faculty of your souls to the utmost tension: command them to regard nothing else for that time: and, if the fowls of the air, thy flying and roving thoughts, will yet come down upon thy sacrifice, let it be thy care, as it was Abraham's, speedily to drive them away; for, by their touch they defile it, but by their stay they would devour it.

2dly. In all the duties of worship which we perform unto God, we ought to glorify him not in our spirits only, but in our bodies.

As, on the one hand, it is gross hypocrisy and dissimulation, if we present our bodies only before the Lord, with all the shows of a real affection and devotion, whilst yet the heart is far estranged from him; so again, on the other hand, it is a saucy irreverence and profane rudeness, to pretend to worship God in the spirit, when we pay him no respect or observance with our bodies. Certainly, he hath created both soul and body; and he is the sovereign Lord of both, and expects that tribute and homage should be rendered him from both. Some men have driven all their religion so far inward, thut it is become altogether invisible; and, because God is a spirit, they serve him as if they were spirits too, and had nothing to do with the body. They have heard that "bodily exercise profiteth little;" nor indeed doth it, where the heart and soul do not both excite and accompany it: and, because it is an empty piece of formality and pageantry to worship God only with the body, they will not worship him with the body at all, but only with the spirit; and so unyoke these two, which God hath made to draw together. How many have we seen affect irreverence, as a part or sign of spirituality; and choose the most unseemly postures they could, only that it might appear they did not flatter nor compliment with God! It is a weakness, hugely incident to human nature, and that I think with which the world was never more tainted than in these our days, to cure extremes by extremes: because hypocrites worship God only with the outward man, and content themselves only with the pomp and ostentation of an external devotion, therefore do so many think it a demonstration of sincerity to discharge the body utterly from bearing any part in their worship: they despise reverence as a piece of formality, and make

communion with God to consist in a familiar rudeness. Certainly, not your souls only, but your bodies also were made for the Lord, as the Apostle speaks, 1 Cor. vi. 13. He expects his tribute of glory from it, although it cannot pay it in so high and refined a manner as the soul: and, though its actions be but gross and inconsiderable, in comparison with the pure and sprightly operations of the mind; yet they are not so inconsiderable, but that God absolutely requires them from us: and if we be not careful to honor him with our bodies, we rob him, if not of part of his service, yet of his servant. I would not insist so pressingly on this, did I not observe that outward reverence is not only growing into disuse, but into contempt among us; and he is accounted God's best friend and intimate, that keeps the least distance: hence proceed those unwieldy gestures, that argue nothing but either a slighting or wearisomeness of the service you are engaged in. Believe it, God is a great King; and, in his service, he expects as humble expressions of your reverence, as any you can think due to the greatest monarchs of the world. What saith the Lord, concerning those, who offered the lame and the maimed for sacrifice, Mal. i. 8? Offer it now unto your governor: see whether he would be pleased and satisfied with such a present: and, if an earthly prince would look upon it as an affront rather than a gift, think you that the King of kings and Lord of lords will account such a lame and imperfect offering worthy of his acceptance? Certainly, that is not fit for God, which is not so much as fit and decent for man. And, though God looks especially at the soul, and the inward affections of the heart; yet he also expects that his offering should be entire, not lame and maimed of one half. He requires from you that outward reverence, that is necessary to testify a due sense of his glorious presence: he requires that you should sacrifice yourselves entirely to him, your bodies upon the altar of your hearts and affections; and both soul and body upon that altar, which alone can make both acceptable, even the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now in all the duties which we perform immediately unto God, we are to glorify him in our bodies two ways.

(1st) Our bodies must be employed as the instruments of God's service.

And, here, the tongue is the chief member; which, by the Psalmist, is oftentimes called his glory, because it is a principal organ of glorifying God. Herewith we bless God for mercies, already received; and herewith we pray unto God for mercies,

which we yet need. And, though praise and prayer be chiefly the work and employment of the heart, and God can distinctly read what is printed there; yet this sufficeth not, if the voice too bear not its part, where it may be done with convenience and decency.

(2dly) We ought to glorify God in our body, by testifying all lowly respect and reverence in those duties which we perform unto him.

Whatsoever liberty the wantonness of our late times hath indulged; yet certainly we ought, in all our addresses unto the great God of Heaven, to compose ourselves in such an humble and reverential posture, as may testify that our souls are deeply affected with the awe and dread of that great Majesty before whom we appear. Wherefore serve the gestures of the body but to signify the respect of the mind? Therefore, if we ought to demean ourselves lowlily in the presence of our superiors, only to testify the inward veneration and esteem which we bear towards them; should we not much more do so, in the presence of the great God? And, if some have falsely and hypocritically made use of this sign, when they have pretended a great deal of zeal and affection in their outward deportment, though inwardly they have been full of all manner of wickedness; yet this should be no argument to us to neglect it: but, first, we should labor to have deep impressions of awe and reverence made upon our spirits; and, then, express that reverence in the most significant and humble deportment of our bodies. This is to glorify God in our spirit and in our body. And, therefore, doth the Scripture everywhere abound, both in giving us directions and examples of outward reverence in the worship of God.

In prayer, we find the holy men of old frequently used three several postures; all of them expressive of a deep humility.

Prostration, or a falling flat on the ground. Thus it is said of Job, that he "fell down upon the ground, and worshipped:" Job i. 20.

Kneeling, which is most often mentioned: yea, and because it was the common gesture in this duty, it is of itself mentioned as a periphrasis of prayer by St. Paul, Eph. iii. 14: "For this cause I bow my knees:" *i. e.*, for this cause I *pray* "unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Standing. So it is said, 2 Chron. vi. 12, that Solomon stood upon the brazen scaffold, and spread forth his hands and prayed: and, chap. xx. 5, that Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation and prayed.

Either of these is a fit posture for prayer; but, especially, kneeling: and they all express that reverence and humility, with which

our souls ought to be possessed, when we appear in the presence of the great and glorious God. But, for other gestures, which either pride, contradiction, or laziness has introduced, they are altogether unfit for this duty; and, whatsoever inward affection and zeal men may pretend to, yet certainly they give but very little demonstrations of it outwardly.

Then, again, for hearing the word, we should do it with a composed gravity and seriousness; showing the fixedness of our minds, by the fixedness of our bodies. Consider, that the great King of heaven speaks to you: he speaks by his ambassador: and, the same attention and reverence, that you would show to your prince, were he speaking unto you; the same, yea and much greater, ought you certainly to show to your God. Concerning particulars, I leave it to your Christian prudence to judge what is most expressive of reverence towards men: which, though perhaps it be no part of the worship of God, yet he expects and requires as a befitting circumstance: yea, and a circumstance so considerable, that it is almost all that your bodies can do in his service. And judge, I pray, whether it be any thing less than slighting God, that you should declare more respect and reverence to your superiors, which are but mortal frail men like yourselves, than to him, who is the immortal and most high God, blessed for evermore.

The Apostle is somewhat large in giving directions to the church of Corinth, concerning their outward demeanor in the public worship of God, 1 Cor. xi. 4: "Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoreth his head." That this is spoken, not only of the preacher, but of the hearers, appears plainly by the following verse: "Every woman, that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered, dishonoreth her head." Now, certain it is, that women were not to pray or to prophesy in the church as teachers; for it was not permitted them to speak: they prayed, therefore, as joining in prayer; and prophesied, as attending upon prophesying, that is, upon preaching [illegible] word. And so, in like manner, the whole assembly of men are said to pray and prophesy; that is, to join in prayer, and to hear the word of God preached. But he, that doth this, saith the Apostle, with "his head covered, dishonoreth his head." And so, again, v. 10. The woman ought "to have power on her head;" that is, a vail, or covering, so called, because it betokened her subjection to the power of her husband: she ought to wear this vail "because of the angels;" that is, that the angels, who are ministering spirits and present in the assemblies of the faithful, joying to behold the

order, reverence, and affection of our worship, might see nothing indecent and uncomely.

Indeed, this outward reverence should be used, not only in respect to the attending angels; but in respect both to ourselves and others, as it may excite and help both our and their inward zeal and affection.

First. It will tend to quicken and stir up thine own devotion.

For, if thou prostratest thyself before God, will not this put thee in mind what thou art doing; and shame thee if thou findest thy thoughts and thy affections wandering, and wholly incongruous to thy bodily deportment? Whilst thou bowest thy knees, and spreadest forth thy hands towards heaven, canst thou, without blushing, suffer thy thoughts and thy affections to gad abroad, and stray from the work of which thou so solemnly makest show? This will oblige thee, if thou hast any ingenuousness, to call them home, and fix them upon what thou art doing. And,

Secondly. It will much tend to excite and quicken the affections of others, who shall behold thy grave and reverend demeanor.

For the expression of our affection is naturally apt to imprint the same on those who shall observe us. When we see them signify so much awe and humility, it will put us in mind to whom they do it, in whose presence both they and we are: and as, in water, face answereth to face, so doth the heart of man to man; and, therefore, it will be very rare, if those affections, which we see lively stirring in others, do not beget in us also some resemblance and similitude of them.

Indeed, there is no stated universal measure for outward reverence: for that, which is accounted a sign of reverence in these nations, as uncovering of the head, &c., in other places is the greatest affront and scorn, that can be offered. But this, notwithstanding, we may take for a sure and infallible rule, that those actions, which are constantly used to express reverence to others, according to the custom of the countries where they are observed, ought much more to be used to express reverence to God in his worship and service. This I suppose is clear; and I am sure it is as necessary, as it is much neglected and slighted among us. I know nothing, that can dispense with us; but only mercy, or necessity: if thou canst not show thy outward reverence without endangering thy health, or tormenting or paining thy body; in this case, he will have mercy, and not sacrifice: but, in all other cases, where it is left free for thee to do it, and thou mayest so

provide that by doing it thou mayest suffer no injury nor considerable detriment to thy body, God doth absolutely require it of thee; for it is almost the only way how thou canst, in any part of his immediate worship, glorify him in thy body.

That therefore is the first proposition, that we ought, in all the duties of God's immediate worship and service, to glorify him by a joint concurrence both of our body and our spirit. To present the body only, without the soul, is but hypocrisy; and, to worship God, without a due reverence expressed by the body, is but a saucy rudeness.

[2] We ought to glorify God in our spirit and in our body, in those things which peculiarly and properly belong to each of them.

And here, should I branch this out into all its particulars, the work would be altogether endless; and we might sooner expect to be glorified with God, than finish the particular consideration of all the actions both of our souls and bodies, whereby we ought to glorify God. I shall, therefore, only touch upon some of the most remarkable things, and so close up this head.

1st. Therefore, as for the soul, we may consider it in its three great faculties of understanding, will, and affections: in all which we ought to glorify God.

(1st) To glorify him in our reason and understanding.

This Solomon calls "the candle of the Lord:" Prov. xx. 27. And this candle we ought to light at God's *lamp;* for so David calls the word of God, Ps. cxix. 105.

[1st] Then we glorify God by our reason and understanding, when we employ it in finding out the truth; and, by a diligent perusal and comparing of scripture with scripture, rationally search out, without prejudice or partiality, what the mind of the Spirit is.

This is the noblest work about which the mind of man can be busied. And, if their industry be commendable, who turn over the monuments of learned men, to inform their understandings only in natural and human knowledge; how much more excellent is it, to study that only book which God hath written, to instruct thee in much deeper mysteries than any that all the learning in the world besides can teach thee? Whilst thou art thus careful to inform thine understanding, in the doctrines of religion and duties of obedience, in what God hath propounded to thee to believe and to practise, thou dost more perfect and advance thy reason, than all those great masters of wit and reason have done, who rested in those glimmering discoveries.

[2dly] We glorify God by our reason, when we subjugate and bring it under the obedience of faith.

There are many sublime mysteries in our faith, which reason alone could never have revealed unto us; yea which, now that they are revealed, it cannot fathom: as, that three persons should be one God; two natures in Christ, one person; that he should be born of a virgin, who was before all time; that he should die, who hath life and immortality dwelling in himself; that, being truly dead, he should by his own power raise himself again: with these things, and many more, unsanctified and untamed reason will still be quarreling. Now if thou wouldest glorify God, bring thy reason to submit to the authority of faith: urge it with a *scriptum est:* "It is thus written," and therefore I thus believe. And, indeed, by thus doing, you do not contradict, but only perfect your reason: for there is infinitely more reason to believe what God hath so plainly testified in his word, than to believe the truth of what we see with our very eyes; since our senses themselves cannot be a proof of verity so infallible, as God's testimony. And therefore St. Peter, speaking of the heavenly voice, which he himself heard in the transfiguration of our Saviour Christ, yet tells us, 2 Pet. i. 19: "We have a more sure word of prophecy: whereunto ye do well that ye take heed:" intimating to us, that the testimony of Scripture is more certain than a voice from heaven. And, therefore, let the truths revealed seem never so repugnant to corrupt reason; yet we ought to acquiesce in the authority and revelation of that God, who is truth itself. In such mysterious depths, I much please myself with that odd saying of Tertullian, "Sepultus resurrexit: certum est, quia impossibile est:" "Christ rose again from the dead: it is certain, because it is impossible." Now glorify God by resigning your reason and apprehension of things wholly to his teaching and instruction. Say, "Lord, thy word hath taught me many mysteries, which my weak and short-sighted reason cannot comprehend: but I desire to sit at thy feet: thy word shall be my reason. This I understand, that thou, who art Truth itself, canst neither deceive, nor be deceived: and therefore I find infinitely more reason, to believe any thing upon thy testimony, than to disbelieve it upon its own seeming impossibility. Since thou hast spoken it, I fully assent: and deliver up all the petulance of my reason, to be chastised and tutored by faith.

(2dly) Glorify God in your wills, by bringing them into a perfect compliance with his holy and sovereign will.

This, indeed, is the hardest and most difficult task which we have

to do. The old contest between God and man, ever since the fall, hath only been whose will shall stand, either his or ours.

And there is a twofold will of God, which our corrupt wills are still opposing; the will of his command, and the will of his providence; of his precept, and of his purpose.

We naturally reject his precepts, and murmur at his providences. Now glorify God by submitting thy will unto his in both.

[1st] Submit thy will unto the authority of his *commands.*

And, though the duties that are enjoined be many of them very difficult, and all contrary to the inclinations of flesh and blood, and it may be to thy secular interests and advantages; yet bridle the reluctances and rebellions of thy will, and set up thy fixed resolution, "This God hath commanded, and this I will do in his strength, whatsoever shame, or dangers, or sufferings I may meet with in the way of my obedience." This highly tends to glorify the authority and sovereignty that God hath over thee, when thou art ready to sacrifice thy corrupt muttering will, and all thy interests, to the commands of thy God.

[2dly] Submit thy will to the overruling will of God's *purpose.*

Whatsoever God doth to thee or brings upon thee, sit down; and, with a contented patience, say, "Not my will, but thine be done."

But concerning this I shall speak more largely hereafter, when I come to show you how we ought to glorify God passively.

(3dly) Glorify God in thy affections: and that must be done, by bringing them to a conformity with God's.

This conformity must be twofold; as to the object, and as to the motive of them.

As to the object, see that thy affections be set upon those things, on which God's are.

As to the motive, see that they be set on them, upon that very account.

As, for instance, thou oughtest to glorify God in thy love, by loving what he loves, himself, his ways, his people, and his ordinances; and that, because he loves them: in thy hatred, by hating what God hates, sin and wickedness; and that, because God hates them: in thy joy and delight, by delighting in what God delights in, that is in himself and his own infinite perfections, and his image; and that, because he rejoiceth in them. And so, of the rest.

2dly. You ought also to glorify God in those things, which appertain peculiarly to the body.

And this is chiefly done, by keeping it pure and undefiled There are two things, which defile the body, intemperance and in continence. And the Apostle expressly commands us to glorify God in our body, by flying both these polluting sins. As for intemperance, we are commanded, 1 Cor. x. 31, "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God:" that is, we ought to make use of the comforts of life with such moderation, as may best fit us for the service of God; and so, as no occasion may be given to blaspheme our holy profession by our riot and excess. And, concerning incontinence, the Apostle hath told us in this chapter, that our bodies are the members of Christ: "Shall we then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid:" and, upon this, he infers the exhortation, "Glorify God in your body;" that is, glorify him by a chaste and modest conversation.

[3] I shall not farther expatiate, in giving you rules how you should make use of other particular advantages for the glory of God. As of health and strength; by blessing God for it, and employing it in the duties both of thy general and particular calling: of riches and estate; by laying it out in refreshing the bowels of the poor, and the maintenance and encouragement of God's worship and service: of thy credit and reputation; by making it subservient to repair the broken and sunk credit of true and real piety. Innumerable are the particulars, wherein God requires to be glorified by us: yea, there is not any one action of our whole lives, but it must be directed to this, as to its last and ultimate end; for we are commanded, that, whatsoever we do, we should do it to the glory of God.

Therefore, in general, I shall only add this, that there are two things which make all we do, whether actions of greater or less importance, glorify God.

1st. When they are done from *heavenly principles.*

Many are these heavenly principles, which ennoble the meanest actions we can perform, and make them glorify God. I shall name only these two.

(1st) The love and fear of God.

I name these two sister-graces together, because they are never found separate: and, indeed, a true filial fear is but an awful love; and, wherever there is a sincere love to God, there will be a fear to offend him. These two are necessary ingredients into every good action; and, wheresoever they are found, they ennoble

what we do, and make the common and ordinary actions of our lives to be spiritual and divine. For what is done from the love and fear of God, is done for God's sake: and, certainly, we cannot more glorify God, than by concerning him in all our actions; for this dedicates all we do, and makes it holy and sacred.

(2dly) Obedience to the commands of God:

Who hath enjoined us the works of our particular callings in our several stations, no less strictly and indispensably, than the duties of his own immediate worship and service. And what soever common, if lawful, action of our lives we do out of conscience to God, and that we may thereby obey his will and precept, it is of water made wine; it is as truly glorifying him, as the most pompous and solemn worship we can perform. By this holy artifice, we make the necessities or employments of this life become subject and tributary to heaven; and what we thus do upon God's account, he will certainly reward.

2dly. When we do any action unto spiritual and *heavenly ends*, then we glorify God by it.

As when we act, not for vain-glory, or only secular advantages; but to give a good example to others, or to fit ourselves the more vigorously to serve God, or to be beneficial to others, &c.

(2) The next thing in order, is to show you how we ought to glorify him passively in both, by suffering the will of his purpose.

Indeed, the best and perhaps the greatest part of a Christian's life is spent in sufferings. When we lie long fallow in a continued prosperity, not ploughed up by any afflictions, our hearts are apt, like rank soil, to spend themselves in unprofitable weeds: our corruptions and vanities will overtop and eat out the very heart of our graces; so that God sees it necessary sometimes to plough us up, and make long furrows upon our backs. And, as husbandmen use to lop off the superfluous excrescences of their trees, to make them the more fruitful: so, that we may become the more fruitful to his praise and glory, the methods of his wisdom and goodness engage him to use the discipline of his pruning-knife; to cut off from us those luxuriances, which, although they may seem to add to our flourishing, yet hinder our fruitfulness.

Now all our sufferings do either respect our bodies, or our spirits; either the outward state of this present life, or else the inward and spiritual state of the soul.

The former may well be divided into two kinds: for they are either

First. Simply, affections; brought upon us by the hand and providence of God, without respecting any other cause but only God's good pleasure and our own evil demerits. Or, else,

Secondly. They are persecutions; brought upon us by the wicked rage of men, for righteousness' sake, and the testimony of a good conscience.

Those sufferings, which concern the spirit and the inward state of the soul, may likewise be well reduced unto two heads: for, usually, they are either temptations or desertions. In the one, we suffer from Satan; in the other, from God.

In all these various kinds of sufferings, some of which fall to the lot of every true Christian, and all of them lie very hard upon some, God ought to be glorified by us.

Indeed our way to heaven is set all along with thorns: troubles and sorrows are thick strewed in it. He is a fool, that sits not down and computes what his religion will cost him. It may be, troubles without, and terrors within; poverty, reproach, bonds; yea, and it may be death itself: besides many sharp agonies and conflicts of the soul; many dark and gloomy seasons, wherein neither sun nor stars may appear to him for divers days: his outward comforts may be to him all sequestered by the rage of men, and his inward by the wrath of God: on which side soever he looks, he may behold nothing but sorrow and anguish; heaven covered with clouds, and the earth with storms. This hath been the portion of many of God's dearest children; and we must make our account that it shall certainly, more or less, be ours. The Apostle hath forewarned us, Heb. xii. 6. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth:" this is the proof of our legitimacy, v. 8. "If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." We know not what particular trials shall befal us, saving that God hath every where testified that afflictions and tribulations abide us. This is the highway to the heavenly city: the cross is our mark; and, if we frequently meet not with this, we may certainly conclude that we have mistaken our road, and shall fall short of our journey's end. And, therefore, St. Paul speaks of it as a case of necessity, Acts xvi. 22. "We must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God." Indeed, as we are men, we are born to trouble as naturally as the sparks fly upwards: and, therefore, although we may well conclude negatively, that certainly we are not traveling towards heaven if we meet with no rubs nor difficulties in our way; yet we cannot conclude in the affirmative, that, if we now suffer,

we shall hereafter be glorified, unless we be careful to glorify God by our present sufferings.

Our sufferings, then, being so great and considerable a part of our lives, let us see how we may glorify God in this fire.

[1] I shall begin with those, which concern the body, and the outward state of this present life.

And here I shall give you several rules, some of which shall be cautionary, and some directive.

1st. For cautionary rules,

(1st) The first shall be this; If thou wouldst glorify God by thy sufferings, beware that thou dost not rashly and unwarrantably *precipitate thyself into them.*

By those sufferings, wherein thou thyself canst have no comfort, God can have no glory. Now consider what small ground for comfort thou canst have, when thou needlessly bringest afflictions upon thyself; and entanglest thyself in those troubles, which either piety or prudence would have taught thee to avoid. These sparks will fly about thee fast enough of themselves: thou needest not blow the coals: but, if thou dost, and are burnt by them, thou hast nothing to complain of, but thine own folly; nor to comfort thee, but that it was thine own choice and resoluteness.

There are two things, that make sufferings rash and unwarrantable: when thou sufferest, what thou hast deserved; when thou sufferest, what thou mightest have avoided.

[1st] Thou rashly and unwarrantably plungest thyself into troubles, when thou sufferest what thy vices have deserved.

How many such wretched creatures are there who have no other hope nor plea for future happiness, but that they are extremely miserable here! and yet all their sufferings are nothing else, but the just revenge that their own lusts and vices take upon them. It is an old maxim, "Non pœna, sed causa facit martyrem:" "not the punishment, but the cause makes a martyr." It is not so much what we suffer, as wherefore, by which God is glorified. What saith the Apostle, 1 Pet. iv. 14, 15? "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye.....on their part, he is evil spoken of; but, on your part, he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busy-body in other men's matters:" for, thus to suffer, is a dishonor to the name of God, and to the profession of the Christian religion. Hast thou, by an idle and dissolute life, brought thyself to want and poverty? or, by intemperance and luxury, exhausted thy body, and dishonored it with diseases as noisome as they are painful? or, by

enormous and flagitious crimes, exposed thyself to the censure and penalty of the law? What comfort canst thou take in this suffering, the shame and infamy of which will be a sad increase to the affliction? Never think that such sufferings can bring any honor to God, when the cause of them was the dishonoring of him. In these, thou art not his, but only the devil's, confessor and martyr.

[2dly] Thou rashly and unwarrantably castest thyself into trouble, when thou sufferest what thou mightest lawfully have avoided.

Be the cause never so good and glorious, yet if we suffer for it needlessly, we can have but little comfort, and God but little glory by such sufferings. It was a strange frenzy in the Circumcellions, a sect of heretical Christians in St. Austin's time, who ambitiously affected martyrdom when there was no persecution: and would forcibly compel others to lay violent hands on them; or, if they failed of that, would lay violent hands upon themselves; glorying in this, as martyrdom and suffering for the sake and testimony of Jesus. And, before these, the Montanists also were very fond and eager for suffering: who, though they did not invite and court it, yet thought it a base and carnal cowardice to use any means to escape it; yea, even that, which our Saviour Christ hath prescribed, Mat. x. 23: "When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another:" and therefore Tertullian, misled by that erroneous spirit, hath written a whole treatise against flight in persecution. This is a strong kind of supererogation, when men shall undergo more for Christ's sake, than he himself is willing to have them. These are not his martyrs, but martyrs to their own vain-glory, and sacrifice themselves to their own fancies and self-will. And so, again, whosoever he be, that chooseth the greater suffering, rather than the less; as death before imprisonment, or imprisonment before a small fine; let his cause be what it will, though really as glorious and excellent as he himself conceives it: yet he suffers rashly for it; and, when he comes to present himself before God, all scourged, and maimed, and famished, and bloody, expecting to receive the crown of glory, he may possibly receive no other reward but that cutting reproof, "Who hath required these things at your hands?" As it is not true courage and fortitude to rush headlong into dangers, when we have no call nor warrant to engage us; so neither is it any true Christian valor to affect dangers and sufferings: we ought not to seek them out, and challenge the combat: it is enough if we cannot escape them without sordid and sinful courses, bravely to bear their shock, and sustain their onset. That Christian doth

sufficiently discharge his duty, who is first careful to avoid dangers; but, if he cannot do this, without making use of unlawful shifts, denying the faith and betraying his own conscience, suffers them without shrinking: but those, who willfully expose themselves to sufferings, either by doing what they need not, or by not avoiding what they may, let them not think that they glorify God by such sufferings; for they suffer not according to his will, but their own: and we may take up the same lamentations concerning them, that David did concerning Abner; "Died Abner as a fool dieth?" So suffer these, die these, as a fool suffers and dies, when it was in their own power to prevent those troubles and afflictions, into which they fall, nay into which they precipitate themselves.

But you will say, "How is it then, that the apostle so highly extols the heroic fortitude of those martyrs of which he tells us, Heb. xi. 35, who, when they were tortured, would not accept deliverance, "that they might obtain a better resurrection?" It seems, by their example, that God may be glorified by a voluntary and arbitrary suffering."

To this I answer, That, if they had refused deliverance offered to them upon conditions that had been righteous and lawful, their refusal of it had been utterly sinful and unlawful, and the Apostle would never have strewed flowers upon their hearses; for they had not been martyrs, but self-murderers: but, if we consult the story to which this passage relates, as it is at large described, 2 Mac. vii. which, though it be not Canonical Scripture, yet gives us a good account of the Jewish affairs under the Grecian empire; we shall find that the Apostle commends their faith and patience, because they would not accept deliverance upon unworthy and sinful terms; they were indeed offered freedom and safety, yea honor and rewards by Antiochus, if so be they would eat swine's flesh, and things offered to idols, contrary to the commands of the law: but, upon such conditions as these, they refused to accept deliverance; expecting, as they professed, and the Apostle testifies, a better resurrection; and esteeming it infinitely more eligible, to sacrifice their lives for the glory of the true God, than to save their lives by sacrificing to false and idol gods. This instance, therefore, makes nothing in favor of those, who rashly thrust themselves into dangers, when they have neither call nor necessity to encounter them; and, then, either complain, or glory, that they are persecuted. This is not to glorify God: for he would have none of his champions come forth to combat, till he himself gives the signal; which he never doth, until his providence brings us into such

circumstances, that we must necessarily either sin or suffer, and no way is left open for us to avoid this dilemma. Then, indeed, when we are thus necessitated, if we choose affliction rather than sin, if we take up the cross rather than stumble and fall at it, if we are willing to undergo the sorest temporal evils that can befal us rather than dishonor God and pollute our own consciences, we do sufficiently declare that we are faithful and courageous soldiers of Jesus Christ, the Captain of our Salvation; and, if we thus "suffer with him," we shall also "be glorified" with him; as the Apostle speaks, Rom. viii. 17.

(2dly) Another cautionary rule is this: If thou wouldst glorify God under sufferings, beware that *thou attempt not to free thyself from them by any unlawful means.*

Consider, that God hath thee now in his hands; and, if thou seekest violently to wrest thyself out of them, thou wilt certainly fall into worse. And yet, alas! what is more ordinary in the world than this? Some renounce the faith, which they formerly owned; yea, and after they have endured many hardships and tribulations for it, fall away only for fear of worse to come: others betake themselves to wicked arts; and, because they are weary of the discipline of God, seek to the devil to deliver them from it: thus Saul consults a witch, and Ahaziah, Beelzebub the god of Ekron: and, indeed, the whole world is full of such practises; and, by stealing and lying and forswearing, men seek to deliver themselves from the troubles lying upon them; and, so they can but get free from the chastisements of God, they care not though they fall into the torments of the devil. Beware, therefore, whenever God brings any affliction upon thee, that thou use no indirect and unlawful means to escape it. It is better to keep thy trouble with thy God, than to lose thy God with thy trouble. And, know this, that, if thou violatest thy conscience to preserve thy body or thy estate, the wound, which thou makest there, will be far more insupportable than any temporal affliction that can befal thee: he, that buys off punishment with sin, makes a most sad and miserable exchange of a temporal for an eternal torment. Beware, therefore, how you thus traffic with the devil: say unto him, when he presents thee with any such unlawful means to rid thee of thy sorrows and sufferings, "No: I am now under the hand of God, and his corrections are infinitely better than thy relief. I will never destroy my soul, to deliver my body; nor run into hell, to get out of prison; nor wound my soul, to cure my body; nor renounce my God and faith, to keep my estate and goods; nor burn in eternal flames, to

escape a stake and faggot. Far be such a thought forever from me. My God is able to deliver me; and he also will deliver me: but, if not, I will not, to save a poor vile wretched carcase, ruin my precious and immortal soul." Certainly, whosoever thinks to save himself from troubles and afflictions by any sinful means, is as foolish as that mariner, who, to lighten his vessel in a storm and save it from shipwreck, should tear up the very planks of it, and cast them into the sea.

(3dly) Beware that your sufferings and afflictions do not *exasperate your spirits, and embitter your hearts against God;* that the more he smites you, the more you should revolt from him.

By so doing, possibly the plague may be removed; but, certainly, the curse will be redoubled: and God may take away a judgment in more wrath and displeasure, than ever he first inflicted it; Isa. i. 5: "Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more." It oftentimes so falls out, that they, who are incorrigible under punishments, sin themselves into impunity. But, believe it, this is the most desperate course ye can take: for, if temporal judgments harden us in sin, God may remove them as ineffectual; but then, assuredly, he will break us with eternal. It was a most cursed speech of that impious king, 2 Kings vi. 33: "This evil is of the Lord: why should I wait for the Lord any longer?" If God command not deliverance at our prefixed time, we are apt to grow enraged at our sufferings, and to revenge ourselves upon the Almighty by our sins. We read of Ahaz, 2 Chron. xxviii. 22, that, "in the time of his distress, he did trespass yet more against the Lord;" and God sets a brand upon him for it, and makes him a notorious sinner for it: "this is that king Ahaz." Beware, therefore, when God afflicts you, that you suffer not your hearts to rise in any mutinous thoughts or passions against him. How much gall and wormwood soever be mingled in the cup which your Father gives you to drink, let it not embitter your hearts: and though he may mark you out for afflictions; yet beware that you give no provocation to set his black mark upon you, for obstinacy and rebellion. Certainly, such sufferings as leave a rancor and spleen in the heart against God, are but the preludes of hell torments: for, there, the damned forever fret under the acrimony of their punishments; and foam out blasphemies and curses against that God, whose dread justice and infinite power eternally triumph over them in their ruin and destruction. And, if thy sufferings do thus exasperate thee against God, know that thou makest that a kind of damnation to thyself, which he

made but an affliction; and fear, lest that, which doth so near resemble the torments of hell, do at last end in them.

2dly. The next thing is to give you some directive rules how you ought to glorify God in an afflicted and suffering condition.

(1st) You ought to glorify God, by a meek patience, and humble submission unto his good will and pleasure.

Those, who murmur and tumultuate under afflictions, accuse God of injustice, and carry themselves as if he had done them wrong, and they suffered undeservedly. And therefore the prophet Jeremiah expostulates with the unreasonableness of this sin of repining, upon the consideration of God's justice; "Lam. iii. 39: "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?"

And there are three considerations exhibited to us in this Scripture, that tend mightily to confirm our patience under the sharpest afflictions which we can suffer in this life.

[1st] That there is no affliction, but it is mingled and sweetened with a great deal of mercy.

Why "doth a living man complain?" Possibly thou art racked with torturing pains, or consumest away in lingering diseases, reduced to extreme necessity and pinching want: yet, still, thou art a living man; and life itself is such a vast blessing, that all miseries and afflictions compared to it, are but drops to the ocean.

[2dly] Consider, that thou art but a man. Why "doth a living man complain, a man, &c.?" a frail, feeble creature; naturally subject to many miseries and sorrows?

Thou hast received thy being *sub hoc onere*, with this burden affixed to it, quietly to bear all the various accidents and troubles, which the wisdom of God shall see good to bring upon thee.

[3dly] Consider what thou hast deserved; and this will be a most effectual means to teach thee patience under what thou feelest. "A man for the punishment of his sins."

If God should mix together all the bitter ingredients, all the stings and venom in the world, and compound of them all one unexampled affliction, and lay that upon thee all the days of thy life; yet this were nothing, to what thou hast deserved: this were nothing, to one gripe of hell torments; how much less is it nothing, to an eternity of them! This, thy sins have merited: and why then should a living man complain for the punishment of his iniquities? When thou liest under any pain or sickness, or whatsoever thy affliction be, think with thyself "How happy is it for me, that I am not now in hell! God hath cast me here, indeed, upon

my bed; but it is mercy, that he hath not cast me into eternal flames. If I now find so much pain, when I am but lightly touched by his hand; oh, what intolerable anguish should I feel, were I now under the unmitigated strokes of his almighty arm! and shall I howl, and fret, and be impatient; when I have infinitely more reason to bless God, that it is not worse with me, than to complain that it is thus? Whatsoever is short of hell, is mercy to such a wretch as I am; who have ten thousand times deserved to be scourged with scorpions, whereas my gracious Father only chastiseth me with rods."

Thus, I say, under all your sufferings glorify God, by a patient submission to his good will and providence: and let it appear, by the meek and calm resignation of yourselves to him in the saddest circumstances of your lives, that you think him neither unjust nor cruel.

(2dly) Glorify God in your sufferings, by a patient expectation of a happy deliverance out of them.

Wait upon God, in the way of his judgments: firmly rely upon his power and his goodness to release you. And, although he may not presently answer your expectations, nor fulfil your desires, yet still continue waiting: for "the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation," and he will do it in the fittest and best season. And therefore we have that expression, Isa. xxiv. 15: "Glorify ye the Lord in the fires;" *i. e.* in the most scorching afflictions that happen, depend upon him for deliverance, either from or by them.

(3dly) Glorify God in your sufferings, by putting good constructions and interpretations upon them.

Be not witty to torment yourselves beyond what God intends, by the afflictions which you endure. Do not conclude that he is casting you off, or become your enemy, or that they are only the pledges and foretastes of eternal sufferings and torments in hell: but reckon that all the afflictions, which he brings upon you, are only for your good; that they are corrections, not curses; and that the issue of them shall be joy and peace. Judge so justly and kindly of God, that he takes no pleasure in the woes and tortures of his creatures; that he chastiseth us only if need be, and corrects us here that he may not punish us hereafter. When we can thus look upon God, and bless him that he is pleased to take so much notice of us as to discipline us, this will be a most effectual means to glorify his mercy and goodness; and to make even a chastising God the object, not only of our fear, but of our love.

(4thly) Glorify God in thy sufferings, by bearing them not only with patience; but, if they be for righteousness' sake, with joy and triumph.

Be not ashamed of the cross of Christ, but glory in it as the greatest honor and ornament of thy profession. So saith the Apostle, 1 Pet. iv. 16: "If any man suffer as a Christian, *i. e* suffer upon the account of his being a Christian, "let him not be ashamed: but let him glorify God on this behalf." Indeed the sufferings and martyrdom of the saints reflect a great deal of honor upon God, in that it shows they prize him above all the world; and account no torments, no sufferings so considerable, as the loss of his love and favor. And therefore it is said, John xxi. 19, when Jesus had foretold to St. Peter somewhat obscurely what should befal him, that he spake this, "signifying by what death he should glorify God."

[2] Let us, in the next place, consider how we ought to glorify God under inward sufferings, which concern the soul.

And these are reducible to two heads: for they are either temptations, which we suffer from Satan; or desertions, which we suffer from God.

1st. That temptations are great spiritual afflictions, ask but those, who have stood exposed to these fiery darts; and they will readily confess, that, next to the unspeakable regret they feel for sometimes yielding to temptations, the greatest burden and trouble of their lives is the continual labor and difficulty of resisting them. For what can be imagined more irksome to an ingenuous Christian, than to be restlessly importuned to do that, which he is assured will be to his own wound and ruin, and to the dishonor of that God whose glory he prefers above his chief joy? And when they are haunted with direful injections and blasphemous thoughts cast into their minds by the devil; thoughts, contrary to the fundamentals of religion, and the common sentiments of natural reason; how could they even shrink from themselves, and abandon their own beings, rather than be forced to hear those horrid suggestions, which their great enemy, the devil, is still impudently whispering unto them!

It is, therefore, of concern to inquire, how we may, when we are thus grievously pestered with these hellish injections, glorify God under so great an affliction.

To this, I answer in general, if thou wouldst glorify God under temptations, be sure still to maintain a most vigorous and resolute

resistance against their assaults: for, by this means, thou wilt glorify God, especially in two of his attributes, his power and his truth.

(1st) By resisting temptations, thou glorifiest the almighty power of God.

Thou fightest his battles, not only against thine, but his great enemy, the devil. And, as the honor of a prince is engaged in the valor and resolution of his soldiers; so God hath, as it were, reposed his honor upon thy courage: thou art his champion, chosen and selected out by him purposely for the combat. Now if thou basely yield, thou leavest not only thine own soul, but God's honor bleeding upon the place: thy conscience becomes a spoil to the devil, and thy name a reproach to religion. Certainly, God intended to make the almighty power of his grace exceeding glorious, by making use of such inconsiderable instruments as you are; instruments, like Gideon's pitchers, frail earthen vessels, but yet such as have the lamp of divine grace burning in them, to rout and put to flight all the legions and black musters of hell. See how God exults in the victorious constancy of his servant Job; and upbraids the devil, that, though he had with his utmost malice assaulted him, yet he still persisted in his integrity, and defeated all the attempts of his impotent malice: Job ii. 3. God speaks of him with delight, and glories in him as a heroic champion. And, if you set yourselves vigorously to oppose the temptations of the devil, God will likewise glory in you; and triumph over Satan to his utter shame, that such weak and feeble creatures should through the assistance of his grace, be able to subdue all the power that hell can arm against them. And this will, to his infinite regret, make that proud and cursed spirit know how utterly in vain all his raging attempts are against their Almighty Lord and Master; since he cannot turn away the face of one of the least of his servants. And, therefore, when St. Paul had prayed thrice, *i. e.*, often, that God would remove that temptation and messenger of Satan which buffeted him, he receives this answer, 2 Cor. xii. 9: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness:" not that God's strength, which is infinite, can receive any addition or perfection from our weakness; but only it is declared and demonstrated to be infinitely perfect and infinitely powerful, when by such contemptible instruments, it can overthrow all the powers of hell.

(2dly) By resisting temptations, thou glorifiest the truth and veracity of God.

For both God and Satan deal with the soul in somewhat a like way, though to different ends. They both urge promises and threatenings, as motives to induce us to their obedience. Satan's are all for the present; present gain and present pleasure, if we consent to his solicitations: but God's promises and threatenings are chiefly for the future. Indeed, we shall here enjoy so much peace of conscience, such a sweet calm and tranquillity of mind, such inward satisfaction in our self-reflections, that, were there nothing else propounded to us, yet even this alone were enough with rational and considerate men to out-bid all that Satan can offer: but God chiefly insists upon the consideration of those things, which shall be accomplished hereafter; and represents unto us eternal rewards and eternal punishments, the one to allure us to duty, the other to deter us from sin; and both to deliver us from the snare of the devil, and that ruin into which we should else precipitate ourselves.

Now consider when you are tempted, whose promises or whose threatenings prevail most with you, God's or Satan's. If you yield to the temptation, it is plain that you prefer Satan's before God's. And this reflects a great dishonor upon him, either, that what he promiseth is not valuable; or, that it is not so certain as what the devil promiseth.

But, the common sense and first notions of all mankind must needs agree in this, that what God promiseth is infinitely more valuable, and what he threatens is infinitely more dreadful, than what can be promised or threatened in a temptation; inasmuch as eternal joys do vastly transcend momentary and impure pleasures which die in their very birth, and leave nothing but a sting and torment in the conscience: and those light afflictions, which the devil tempts us to avoid by sinning, are poor inconsiderable nothings, in comparison with that eternal anguish and horror, which God threatens to inflict on us for sinning.

What is it then, that makes the temptations of the devil so prevalent and effectual with most men in the world? Is it not because they do not believe him, who is truth itself, in what he promises and threatens; but assent to the false promises of him, who is a liar from the beginning? There is no man, that yields unto a temptation, but it is because he believes Satan rather than God. Infidelity is the root of all sin: and, by this, they cast a high disparagement and dishonor upon his truth and veracity. Did we but believe that heaven is so inconceivably glorious, a place where joy and bliss keep their eternal residence, and where we shall

forever live in the smiles and love of God, if now for a few short years we endeavor to our utmost to live holy and obedient lives; did we but believe that the crown of glory is so massy, and all the gems of it so bright and orient; that we shall there bathe in rivers of pleasure, and forever feel and enjoy more satisfaction than we can now conceive: did we but believe these things as the Scripture hath revealed them to us, without diffidence or hesitation; nay, did we but believe them as probable and likely enough to come to pass, should we so cheaply forfeit the hopes of these things, for the impure and vanishing delights of sin? We find that the promise of some temporal reward from men, is of force enough to allure us us to very hard tasks and difficult enterprises: how far will many venture, and how much pains and labor will they take to obtain it! and yet the promises, that God himself hath made of eternal glory, in comparison with which to promise scepters and kingdoms is but to promise trifles and gewgaws, have so little effect upon the generality of mankind to win them to a holy and obedient life! Whence is this, but that there is a great deal of atheism and infidelity secretly lurking in men's souls, which never more discovers itself, than when we suffer ourselves to be hurried away by temptations, against all those considerations, which the Scripture hath propounded to us of eternal rewards and punishments? Did we but believe that there is a day of reckoning to come, when we must stand before a righteous and impartial judge, to give a strict and narrow account of all our actions, and receive our doom from his mouth according to what we have done; did we but believe the intolerable wrath of God, the fire and darkness, woe and anguish, and all those racks and engines of torture that are prepared for the damned; who of us would ever again hearken unto a temptation, which only bids us plunge ourselves headlong into such an abyss of miseries? We should no more dare to commit the least sin against God, than to be damned, and run into the flames of hell with our eyes open, and seeing our destruction evidently before us. But the truth is, we are credulous towards the devil, and infidels towards God; and most gross and deplorable fools, in both. Satan labors most to weaken our faith: for he knows, if he can but once beat us from that guard, all his temptations will certainly prove effectual and do execution upon us. And, therefore, our Saviour tells Peter, Luke xxii. 31, 32: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not:" teaching us, that there is no such sure defense against the tempta-

tions of the devil, as the strong and vigorous actings of faith: while we believe what God hath spoken, we shall never be allured by whatsoever the devil can suggest. And, therefore, also, the Apostle, when he gives us the panopoly and complete armor of a Christian, exhorts us, Eph. vi. 16: "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." *Above all: i. e.* either chiefly look that your faith be strong: or, else, as the shield was used to be a defense not only unto the body, but to the rest of the armor likewise; so, *above all* or over all the other pieces of your spiritual armor, take *the shield of faith*, for this will be a defense not only to your souls, but to your other graces, to keep them from being bruised and battered by the temptations of the wicked one. "Whom resist steadfast in the faith." 1 Pet. v. 9.

2dly. The second spiritual suffering is desertion, wherein we suffer from God.

And this is a very heavy affliction to that soul, who ever knew what the presence, and favor, and the comfortable and reviving influences of the love of God mean. When a pious Christian hath once fixed God as his chief and only good, and taken the measures of all his joy and content from his union to and communion with that sovereign good, how infinitely cutting must it needs be for God to absent and withdraw himself, and leave him under dark and gloomy apprehensions that he is rejected and cast out of favor, and disinherited by his heavenly Father!

Now, in this doleful condition, when God hath eclipsed the light of his countenance, and withdrawn from us the comforts of his "free Spirit," how shall we demean ourselves, so as to glorify him?

To this I answer: In this case, which is confessedly very sad and disconsolate, observe these following directions.

(1st) If you would glorify God under desertions, still stay yourselves upon him, though you cannot see him.

Though you cannot see his face, yet lay hold on his arm. See that most comfortable place, Isa. l. 10: "Who is among you, that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light?" Here is a holy soul described in its worst estate; enveloped in thick darkness, as dark as the confused heap and rubbish of the first chaos; not having the least gleam of light breaking in upon it, either from the face of God, or the reflection of its own graces. Now what must this dark soul do, in this dark condition? "Let him trust in the name of the

Lord, and stay himself upon his God." Now this staying upon God, in a time of darkness and desertion, implies, that, although we have no evidence, no light, nor knowledge that we are his, and that he is our God in covenant with us; yet, that we have fixed our firm and settled resolutions, to devolve and roll the eternal concernments of our precious souls upon his mere mercy and free grace through the merits of Jesus Christ. Now what a vast revenue of glory will this bring in to God, when we thus lay ourselves at his feet; when we thus hang and clasp about him; and resolve, with holy Job, chap. xiii. 15: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." So when, after the various tossings and tumults of our unquiet thoughts, we can rest upon this, "Possibly, God will destroy me; but I am not certain: yet I will cleave unto him: I will venture my everlasting state and my immortal soul, merely upon his mercy, in the ways of duty and obedience. If God will shake off such a viper as I am into hell-fire; yet he shall shake me off his arm: on that, I will depend: by that, I will hold: if I perish, I perish. Sure I am, that, by continuing in my sins, I shall unavoidably perish; but, if I yield myself to him, and humbly crave his mercy and grace, I can but perish, but, possibly, may live." Thus to resolve, and thus to act, doth exceedingly glorify the rich and sovereign mercy of God; when, in all the storms and fluctuations of a troubled spirit, we cast out this as our sheet anchor; and commit the eternal interests of our souls only to this security.

(2dly) If you would glorify God under desertion, encourage yourselves that he will again return unto you, and clear up his loving-kindness and favor unto your souls.

Think not thyself past hope, because, for the present, thou art without comfort. Never judge so hardly of God, that, every time he hides his face, he intends likewise to take away his mercy from thee. Though the clouds be never so thick gathered, yet he is able to shine through them all: he is able to scatter and dissipate them; and to make a day arise upon thy soul, by so much the more glorious, by how much the night and darkness hath been more obscure and dismal. Be assured that God can, and hope that he will, lead you through this valley of the shadow of death; and bring you into an estate made glorious and full of beauty, by the light and smiles of his loving countenance.

(3dly) Call then to remembrance thy former experiences of the mercy and goodness of God to thy soul.

And though now, for the present, God seems to write only bitter

things against thee: yet, as absent friends use to read over former letters, and solace themselves with the review of those expressions of kindness which they had formerly received; so, now that the commerce between heaven and thy soul seems to be interrupted, and thou canst receive nothing from thence to comfort and revive thee, yet read over thy former evidences, review the former letters and tokens of his love to thee: for, though he hath withdrawn the fresh supplies of comfort, yet he hath still left thee a stock in thy hands, enough, at least, to keep thee alive, and to support thee from sinking into utter despair. See Asaph's case, Ps. lxxvii., where we have a most doleful complaint of a poor deserted soul; verses 7–9: "Will the Lord cast off forever? and will he be favorable no more? Is his mercy clean gone forever? doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?" You see that he all along seems to lay the very accent of damnation upon his desertion; "*forever! forever!*" but consider, then, how he supports himself, v. 10: "And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right-hand of the Most High. The years of the right-hand of the Most High:" *i. e.*, I will recall to mind former times, wherein God bestowed upon me the blessings of his right-hand; and, in this present dearth, live upon what I laid up in the years of plenty and abundance. So, in your desertions, do you glorify God; by recalling to mind former mercies, and former discoveries of his special grace and love to your souls. Can none of you remember, when you would have ventured your souls upon the truth of those joys and comforts which you have felt? When you were willing to depart out of this world, and to be found of God in no other estate than you knew yourselves to be then in? And, what! can you so suddenly be at a loss for comfort enough to keep you alive, who, but a while since, had so much as to make you hope and wish for death? Whence proceeds this unhappy change? Is God unfaithful? Is his love fickle? Are his promise and covenant reversible; that you are so soon cast down from assurance to doubtings, and from doubtings to despondency? If not, but that there is the same merit in the blood of Christ, the same efficacy in his intercession, the same stability in the purpose of God, and the same fidelity in his promises now as there was in your highest joys, what reason have you to dishonor him by those distracting fears, doubts, and jealousies which torment you? Be persuaded, therefore, to glorify the truth and faithfulness of all

these, by encouraging yourselves in the same hopes, though it may be they flourish not into such rich assurance as formerly.

(4thly) The last direction shall be this: If you would glorify God under desertions, be sure that want of comfort cause you not to forsake duty.

Though thou mayest come sad to duty, and depart sad from it; though the ordinances may be to thee but empty dry breasts, and thou canst find no refreshment, no sweetness in them: yet this is the greatest commendation of a true Christian, a certain sign of the sincerity of his obedience, and a high credit and honor unto God, that he will be constant in his service and attendance, though he hath no present wages given him. Yea, and in this course thou art most likely to regain thy lost comforts. Thou wilt at last receive thy dole, if thou keep constantly attending at wisdom's gates. Howsoever, God and his ordinances are hereby highly honored, when the consolations, which thou hast formerly found in them, have left such a deep impression on thee, as to make thee resolve to attend on them as long as thou livest.

iii. The third head of the general proposition still remains: and that is, to show you WHAT FORCE AND INFLUENCE THE CONSIDERATION OF OUR REDEMPTION OUGHT TO HAVE UPON US, TO OBLIGE US THUS TO GLORIFY GOD.

The truth is, as I have at the entrance of this subject opened it at large to you, God hath many ties and obligations upon us: as he is our almighty Creator, our merciful Preserver, our all-wise Governor, our bountiful Benefactor, &c.; upon all which accounts, we ought entirely to devote ourselves unto his service. But, the strongest bond of all, which nothing can violate but the foulest disingenuousness and the blackest ingratitude in the world, is that soft and easy one of being our Saviour and Redeemer. This is a relation overflowing with love and sweetness: but yet such a sweetness, as hath an efficacious strength in it: such a love, as lays a holy violence upon the ravished soul; and, by a free constraint and a willing force, makes it surrender itself wholly and unreservedly unto its gracious God, who hath not only required it as a gift, but bought it as a purchase. To which purpose the Apostle speaks most fully, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15: "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

For the prosecution of this, we may observe that there are, in general, three strong obligations, which our redemption lays upon us to glorify God, viz: justice, gratitude, and interest.

1. We "are bought with a price," and therefore it is but *justice and equity* to serve and glorify that God, who hath purchased us to himself.

For, in these words, the Apostle alludes to the custom, that was common in his days, of selling and buying slaves for money; who generally were such as were taken captives in their wars, and all the posterity of such captives. These were absolutely under the power of their masters that had bought them, and to be disposed and employed as they thought fit; called, therefore, by Aristotle, εμψυχα οργανα, "living instruments," or "animate utensils," to serve their pleasure. Such we ought to be towards God: for, man rebelling against his Maker, God declares war against him, and makes him captive to his dread justice; but, not willing utterly to destroy him, sells him to his own Son, who pays down a full price for us, and vindicates us to himself, that we might become his servants, subject unto his will, and employed in his work: which if we refuse or detract, we are guilty of injustice in depriving him of his right; and may well fear, lest he should, according to his compact with his father, turn us back upon the hands of justice as unprofitable servants, to be punished and destroyed by him.

(1) Consider, the price, that he paid down, doth infinitely outbid the purchase, and exceed the value of all that thou art and hast.

Thy Saviour hath paid down the inestimable treasure of his own merits: he hath taken upon him our nature, and with it our griefs and sorrows; suffered all the indignities, that insulting rage and spite could put upon him; waded first through his own tears, and then through his blood, and every drop of both is infinitely more worth than thou and all the world. He stood not to beat down the price, but readily gave for thee whatsoever was demanded: yea, his very life and soul; a price so exceedingly precious, that, were we far more considerable creatures than we are, yea more excellent than the highest order of angels, it must needs leave us under the confusion of shame and blushing, to think that ever we should be so much over-valued. And wherefore was this, but that we might be solely and entirely his; that none might have any claim to us but himself? And, what! Shall the great God give his only begotten Son in exchange for a servant; and yet wretched thou refuse his service? Shall the Son so highly esteem the glory, that such poor vile nothings as we are can bring him, as to divest him-

self of that glory, which he had with the Father before the world began; and yet fall short of this too? Wilt thou defeat him of his bargain, when he and justice are fully agreed; and all the right and title, that the wrath of God had to thee formerly, is now made over to the Son of his love?

(2) Consider, that all the use, which thy Saviour can make of thee, is only that thou shouldst glorify him; and, by obedience and a holy life and conversation, shouldst serve to the setting forth of his praise.

This is the very end, for which he hath redeemed thee. What saith the Apostle, Tit. ii. 14? He "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." This is the end why he died for thee; and this is all the service he expects from thee, though he hath bought thee at so dear a rate. And, what! shall so rich a price then be cast away in vain? Shall it be in vain, that thy Saviour hath lived, that he hath died, that he hath risen again, and is now interceding at the right-hand of the majesty on high? As he hath lost his life for thee, shall he also lose his very death too? Shall he lay out so much to purchase thee, and all be lost? Shall his blood run waste; and so rich a stock be spent upon so poor and wretched a thing as thou art, and not obtain that neither?

(3) Consider: If thou livest not to thy Saviour, who hath died for thee, and by his death bought and purchased thee to himself, thou art guilty of robbery; of sacrilege, which is the worst robbery and most branded injustice in the world.

For thou robbest thy God; and stealest away a servant, even thyself, from him: for thou art his, by the right of purchase and redemption; and, so much of thyself, of thy time, of thy strength, of thy parts, of thy soul and affections, as is not employed in his work and service, so much is purloined from him. And, if God justly complains of the Jews, Mal. iii. 8, as guilty of heinous robbery and sacrilege, because they defrauded his servants the priests of their tithes and offerings, of brute or inanimate creatures; how much more heinous is it to defraud him of his servant, who ought to be a priest unto him, and continually to offer up the sacrifices of praise and obedience, which he more values than whole hecatombs of slain beasts?

(4) Consider, again: If, instead of glorifying him by thy obedience, thou dishonorest him by thy rebellions and impieties, thou not only defraudest him of his servant, but, what is infinitely worse, of the very price that he paid.

Thou defraudest him of his sufferings, of his death, of his most precious blood. Yea, thou dost, in a sense, most sacrilegiously rob him of himself: Christ had never abased himself from the glory of heaven, but to be glorified here upon earth: he never had taken upon him the form of a servant, but that he might here have a seed to serve him: and, so far forth as we refuse this, so far do we make frustrate and to no purpose all that he hath either done, or suffered, or been, for our sakes. And, therefore, if thou wouldst not be unjust to thy Saviour, who hath been so merciful to thee; if thou wouldst not rob him of what he hath so dearly bought, and so highly values; look upon thyself as obliged, by all the bonds of equity and honesty, to live to his glory, who hath redeemed thee to this very end and purpose, that thou shouldst glorify him.

2. We are bound, not only in justice and equity, but, in *ingenuousness and gratitude*, to glorify God, upon account of our redemption.

"Ye are bought with a price;" and, therefore, if there be but any the least remainders of modesty and bashfulness left in you, you cannot but look upon yourselves as obliged to serve and honor that gracious God, who hath been pleased freely to bestow so great and inconceivable a mercy upon you.

(1) For, consider, what it is from which you are redeemed.

And that is all the woe and misery, that the heart of man can conceive, or the nature of man endure; all the rankest poison, that ever was wrapped up in the bowels of the most direful and comprehensive curse. To speak out a few syllables of it, it is the wrath of God, the torments of hell, everlasting burnings: a state so infinitely miserable, that the very malice of the devil himself will be satisfied upon us when he hath brought us into it. Indeed, it is utterly impossible to declare the wretchedness of that estate to the full: unless we could speak flames, and put a whole eternal damnation into words and phrases. But from this wrath, which is both unutterable and intolerable, hath the mercy of our gracious Saviour redeemed us.

(2) Consider with what price he hath bought us.

A price of infinite value and worth. He hath given himself for us, laid down his life, and shed his most precious blood as the price of our redemption. Yea, so earnestly did his love engage him to free us from that woeful condition into which we had brought ourselves, that he voluntarily puts himself into it, to rescue us; and is made a curse, that he might redeem us from the

curse: he interposes between the wrath of God and our souls; and receives into his own body all those envenomed arrows, that were shot at us. And, as if the mercy of our redemption alone were not considerable enough to recommend his love to us, he abases himself, that he might exalt us; takes upon him our sins, that he might bear our punishment; and lays himself under all the load and burden of his Father's wrath, which pressed him so hard as to wring from him clots of blood in the garden, and rivers of blood on the cross, and to force him in the most doleful passion of an afflicted soul to cry out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" whilst we, in the meantime, whose proper portion and desert all this was, who should ourselves have been dragged forth to execution, and made the subjects and trophies of God's wrath and vengeance, we are the darlings and favorites of heaven, courted and caressed by his choicest love: we live in the smiles of God: every day is a festival with us. And how seldom is it, that we so much as look out to consider what our blessed Redeemer hath done and suffered for us! Or, if we do, do we not behold him the most perfect map of sorrow and misery, that ever was represented to the world? Did ever grief and sorrow so perfectly triumph over any, as over our blessed Saviour? All our private and personal sorrows are but partial: still there is some remnant of us that escapes: but, here, both the wrath of God, and the rage of men, and, as it was in the great and universal deluge, the windows of heaven above and the fountains and bars of the deep beneath, are all opened, and pour out their store of floods upon him. He was afflicted, and he was oppressed; a man "acquainted with grief," intimate and familiar with sufferings.

And, now, what doth thy dear Redeemer require at thy hands, in lieu of all that he hath done and suffered for thee, but only that thou shouldst live to him, who hath both lived and died for thee; that thou shouldst yield up thy life in obedience to him, who hath been obedient for thee to the very death? An expectation infinitely rational; and which thou canst not have the face to deny, unless all modesty and ingenuousness are perished from thee.

[1] If God had put the terms of thy redemption into thy own hands, couldst thou have offered less for the ransom of thy soul?

Thou art forfeited to justice, and standest liable to everlasting death and damnation. Suppose that the adored design of saving sinners by Jesus Christ had never entered into the eternal counsel of God, but he had resolved to transact the whole affair with thyself; and, on the one hand, had evidently set before thy face all the horrors and torments of hell, if thou hadst seen whole seas of

burning brimstone come rolling towards thee, and some waves of them had broke and dashed upon thee; and, on the other hand had propounded the most rigid observances and macerating penances, all that is here grievous and irksome, not only to thy corrupt will and humor, but also to human nature itself to undergo, as the only price and condition of escaping this so evident and so imminent a destruction: which wouldst thou have chosen? Wouldst not thou, upon thy bended knees, have accepted of the hardest terms that could be offered thee, to spend all thy days in sighs and tears, and at last to offer up thyself a burnt-sacrifice to God, rather than to fall into that abyss of woes and torments, in comparison with which, all that we can suffer in this life is but pleasure? This, certainly, would be thy choice. And, what! when thy Saviour hath already taken all the hard terms upon himself, and left nothing for thee to do, but only to show a testimony of thy grateful acceptance of it; when he hath compounded for thee, satisfied all the demands of justice, left nothing for thee to pay, besides a small acknowledgment of his infinite mercy: with what face canst thou deny him this? He only requires that thou shouldst serve and glorify him, by living according to the rules of true reason and religion: he expects no torments, no sufferings from thee, nothing expiatory for thy sins; but only that thou sin no more: and, if thou refuse him this, pity it is that ever so great love should be laid out upon such disingenuous and ungrateful wretches. Possibly, thy sloth, and the devil joining in with it, may persuade thee that it is a hard saying and a grievous imposition to glorify God, to live by rule, and to direct all thy actions to his honor and praise: but think also with thyself, that, if God should release any damned soul, who hath sadly felt how infinitely stinging and intolerable eternal torments, fire and brimstone, and the never-dying worm are; if God should release such an one from hell, and promise him forever to escape it upon the same terms as he hath promised us, how rigorously careful and circumspect would he be in all things to please his great and terrible God, whose justice he hath already felt, and whose mercy he now may hope for! Yea, were the conditions of his salvation to be damned yet a thousand years longer, how joyfully would he lie down in his flames, court and invite those torments that would thus deliver him from the everlasting residue of them! What sense and experience would work upon such an one, that let faith and gratitude work upon thee: love and serve thou that Redeemer, who hath delivered thee from that woe, which thou never yet feltest; who hath borne all himself and hath left thee nothing to do, but what thou art abso-

lutely obliged to as a creature, whether he had redeemed thee or no, even to love, serve, and fear thy great and glorious God.

[2] The Lord Jesus Christ hath infinitely abased himself to procure thy redemption; and therefore, at least ingenuousness and gratitude should engage thee to exalt and glorify him.

He emptied himself, saith the Scripture, and "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant:" Phil. ii. 7. "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we saw him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men:" Isa. liii. 2, 3. And, what! can thy ingenuousness, O Christian, suffer that he should remain still vile, who was thus vilified and humbled for thy sake? Wilt thou not repair his honor? And, seeing he was pleased to lay aside his glory, to veil and eclipse himself in our flesh, only that he might accomplish the arduous work of our redemption, how can we but account ourselves obliged by the strongest bonds of gratitude and thankfulness to celebrate his praise, and endeavor that his glory may be as much promoted by us, as it was lessened and obscured for us?

(3) We are bound to glorify God for our redemption from motives of *interest and advantage.*

"Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God," because without this, you can never reap any fruit, any benefit by your redemption. It is only a holy and obedient life, that brings glory to God, and that can possibly bring you unto glory. It is true, Christ hath died and risen again for you: he hath borne the whole load of wrath that was due to you for your sins. Yet, boast not of this; for it will all signify nothing unto you: without a strict, pious, and godly life, redemption, yea salvation itself, cannot save you. The terms are immutably fixed: Christ is "the author of eternal salvation" only to those "that obey him." And, therefore, as ever thou hopest to have any benefit by the redemption of Christ Jesus; as thou wouldst not have his blood shed in vain, and spilt as water upon the ground that cannot be gathered up; as ever thou hopest to see the face of thy God and thy Saviour with joy and comfort in endless glory: so endeavor, by a holy, pure, and spotless life, to glorify him here on earth: for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord:" Heb. xii. 14. And think with thyself, O sinner, how justly dreadful it will be to thee, at the last day, to be brought into the presence of thy blessed Redeemer: when thou shalt see that body, that was buffeted, crucified, pierced, that bled and died for thee; and be upbraided by thy ireful God, that all those pains, and sorrows, and agonies were sustained for

thee, and yet all in vain, because of thy willful unbelief and impenitence: where wilt thou hide thy shame? How many rocks and mountains, heaped one upon another, will suffice to cover thee from the wrath of that God, whose love and mercy thou hast so wofully abused? It must needs redound to thy eternal horror and confusion, that ever thou shouldst so slight the fearful wrath of God, as to neglect and despise the redemption that Christ Jesus hath purchased from it, so ignominiously as not to accept of it when it was offered, when all the charges of it were borne and defrayed by himself; but only an acknowledgment of the kindness required from thee.

IV. I shall be very brief in the APPLICATION, having already treated of very many things at large, which are wholly practical.

And, therefore, the only use that I shall make of it, and so close up this whole subject, shall be to exhort you to a constant care and endeavor to glorify God. Consider,

i. It is THE GREAT END OF OUR BEING; and, indeed, the noblest and highest end for which we could be created.

Indeed, all things were made, as by God, so for God: he is the first cause and the last end of all. Yet, there is a difference according to the order of beings. For irrational creatures were made to glorify God, only objectively; as they represent unto us many evident footsteps of God's most glorious attributes and perfections: thus the heavens are said to declare the glory of God, only because their amplitude, beauty, and order do set forth, to all considerate beholders, the infinite power, wisdom, and goodness of the great Artificer; who, by his word, framed such vast orbs, and imprinted on them such an impetus of various and yet regular motions. But man was created to glorify God, actively and intentionally; by the choice of his deliberate judgment, to fix God as the end of all his actions: and, if he falls short of this, he falls short of his very reason and nature, and is created in vain. Thinkest thou, O man, that God hath created thee only to show what an excellent piece of work his power and wisdom can achieve? This he hath sufficiently done, in breathing forth upon the face of the earth so many other creatures, which are all fearfully and wonderfully made as well as thyself: he need not to have framed thee, if he had intended only a specimen and essay of what his almighty power could do: no; but, whereas the innumerable kinds of other creatures serve to glorify God after this manner, reflecting back all their perfections indirectly upon God, thou wert formed to glorify

him more directly and immediately: that is the ultimate end, to which they are all overruled; but this is the end, which thou oughtest to propound unto thyself. Otherwise,

1. Thou *degradest thyself* from the rank and dignity of thine own being, and herdest thyself among brute beasts.

It is not so much reason and discourse, that make a difference between beasts and men, as religion. We see many strange and wonderful operations of those, which we call irrational creatures; of which we can give no account, unless they do in their sphere partake some glimmerings of reason, which we usually ascribe wholly to ourselves; but none at all of any religion, or notion, or adoration of a deity. This is the crown and perfection of thy nature: it is that incommunicable property that separates us from beasts. And, therefore, if thou servest, if thou glorifiest not thy God, thou dost but debase and disparage thyself, and art made a man in vain. Thou, who abandonest thyself to any way of wickedness, whose intemperance burdens thy nature with surfeits as much as thy conscience with sin and guilt; thou, who wallowest in impure lusts, and makest thy body a brothel, and thy soul a prostitute; thou, who, by lying, and swearing, and stealing, declarest evidently that thou fearest neither God nor man; wherefore wert thou made a man? Hadst thou been a brute or an inanimate creature, thou wouldst as much have glorified the attributes of God as now thou dost, and much less dishonored him: yea, thou now dishonorest him, which they do not; inasmuch as thou sinkest below the rank of thine own nature, and turnest recreant to the principles of thine own being.

2. Thou not only degradest thyself, but *degradest God* too, and exaltest something above him.

For every wicked person dethrones the true, and sets up a false god in his stead. It is the nature of man, to seek and serve something, as its ultimate and highest end. And whatsoever we propound to ourselves as our utmost end, that we make our god. Now thou, who refusest to glorify God, whom is it that thou glorifiest? Is it not thyself? Thou settest up thyself as thy idol, and art thine own idolater. Either thou makest thy profit, or thy pleasure, or thy humor thy god: this thou seekest, and this thou servest, to this all thy actions tend and are directed. That is every man's god, which he most seeks to please and to serve. And what a horrible affront is this to the most high and only true God, that thou, whom he made for his servant, shouldst become his rival; and what he intended for himself, should be set up for a deity against him!

ii. Consider, that GOD WILL CERTAINLY HAVE HIS GLORY OUT OF THEE.

If thou wilt not glorify his holiness by thy obedience, thou shalt glorify his justice by thy perdition. He will not lose by thee: but thou, who hast extravagantly lived without and beside the order of thy reason as a man, and of thy religion as a Christian, shalt be compelled and brought into the order of his subjects as a damned wretch and rebel. But this will be sadly to thy cost: and when thou liest stretched out and racked with the extremity of thy torments, thou wilt then too late reflect on thy gross and desperate folly; that ever thou shouldst refuse to glorify that God voluntarily by thy obedience and submission, who now forceth thee to glorify him, whether thou wilt or no, by thy intolerable and eternal tortures.

iii. Consider, that, BY GLORIFYING GOD, WE DO INDEED BUT GLORIFY OURSELVES.

For he hath been pleased so graciously to entwine his glory and ours together, that whilst we endeavor to promote the one, we do but indeed promote the other. "Them, that honor me, I will honor:" 1 Sam. ii. 30. And what a vast encouragement is this to the cheerful performance of all the duties that God requires at our hands, how hard and difficult soever they may seem, to consider that this, that God commands of me, is no barren piece of service! Possibly, I may lose my reputation, I may lose my estate, or I may lose my life by it; but yet, if it bring glory to God, it will certainly bring abundant reward to me. And, though I see nothing spring up of it here on earth, but thorns and briars to rend and pierce me through with many sorrows; yet, doubtless, my reward is with my God; and heaven shall repay with interest all that glory which I have brought unto him, by crowning me with glory, immortality and eternal life. Oh, how happy and blessed a thing is it, when we come to breathe out our souls into the arms of God, then to be able to reflect upon a well-spent life: and to recommend our flying souls to our gracious God, as our Saviour did, John xvii. 4, 5: "I have glorified thee on earth: I have finished the work, which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with" that "glory which" thou hast prepared for me "before the world was." Unto the which glory, God of his infinite mercy bring us, through the merits of Jesus Christ: to whom, &c.

END OF VOLUME II.

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